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Two Vets, One Legacy

About 50 years separate the military experiences of these two vets. One served in the Air Force, the other in the Army. One is a lifetime member of The American Legion who has held numerous offices and fought on countless important issues; the other is a more recent Legionnaire with a passion to learn and to carry on the legacy.

Yet, despite some notable differences, an undeniable bond shines through — a bond between veterans, a bond between Legionnaires and a bond forged from a USAA connection.

In a recent co-interview, Legion Past National Commander (1987-1988) John "Jake" Comer and USAA Financial Foundations Specialist Jonathan Villela sat down to share their love of service to country, their support of fellow veterans and their views on the important alliance between The American Legion and USAA as the two organizations enter their third year together.

John P. "Jake" **Comer**

Military Experience: Communications Sgt., U.S. Air Force, 1951-1955

Legion Involvement: Member since 1963; National Commander 1987-1988; life member of the Cecil W. Fogg/ Thomas J. Roberts Post #78 of Hyde Park, Massachusetts

Career Highlights: Western Union, John Hancock Life Insurance Company, City of Quincy Board of Assessors and Housing Authority, House Ways & Means Committee in the State House

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Jonathan Villela

Military Experience: Airborne Infantry, U.S. Army, 1998-2002

Legion Involvement: Member since 2011; Audie L. Murphy Post #336 of San Antonio, Texas

Career Highlights: Humana Military, Department of Veterans Affairs, USAA

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BROTHERHOOD OF SERVICE: Two Vets,

John "Jake" Comer and Jonathan Villela met at USAA headquarters in San Antonio to discuss the bonds among veterans and the alliance between The American Legion and USAA.

Jonathan interviews **Jake**

Jonathan: When did you decide to join the Air Force?

Jake: I graduated from high school in 1949, and I decided not to go to college. In January the next year, five of us were out one day having a few pops and we said, "Hey, let's go down and join the Air Force." During the Korean conflict, there were always willing young American men and women who would go and join for their country and do the right thing. We were called up in March, and away I went to Sampson Air Force Base in New York.

Jonathan: What did it mean for you to serve in the Air Force?

Jake: I felt proud! After my basic training I was sent to Cheyenne, Wyoming, for teletype operator school. My entire class was then sent to Korea and my one wish was that I had been sent with them. But that was not to be, as the Air Force needed one telegraph operator in Germany and my name was selected. I would rather have gone to Korea and been part of the action, because if you're in the service during a time of war, you want to be where the action is. Wiesbaden and Kaiserslautern, Germany, proved to be a great tour of duty for three years of my four-year commitment. And then I ended my Air Force career at Carswell AFB in Ft. Worth, Texas, where I was discharged in May 1955 and proud of my military service.

Jonathan: The military definitely sends you where they need to. When you got out, how were you treated? What did you do?

Jake: I was treated great, and I was able to wear my uniform home and enjoy it. Korean veterans had minor problems, but they were not the problems that faced Vietnam veterans. Since my Air Force and teletype experience fit me well, I was able to get a decent job when I got out at the Western Union Telegraph Company. I was a telegrapher for them for seven years. A couple of years later, I joined The American Legion. I was six months in at my local post when the adjutant resigned. They said "Comer, you can read," so I became the adjutant, and I've held an office in The American Legion ever since. I've been a member for 50 years.

Jonathan: What was your perception of USAA before the two organizations formed an alliance and you became a member?

Jake: I had never heard of USAA until I went to an American Legion convention. Now when I look at your building and the thousands of employees you have, it's amazing that I had never heard of it. Actually, what impressed me the most was you. When you and I talked about what USAA had to offer, I went home and decided that I was going to become a member.

In 1948, I got my driver's license and car insurance, and I was with the same outstanding company for 60 years. I called and said, "I'm sorry, but I'm going to have to leave," and they wanted to know what

company I was going with, I told them USAA. They said, "No problem. You're with a good company." So, USAA, here I am.

Jonathan: What are your thoughts about veterans who served in different wars and share a bond to serve afterwards?

Jake: Well, we all served different times, for different reasons. The difference with what's happening now is that we're dealing more with the reserve component of the military. We just joined and went as individuals, but now they go over as a unit and come back home as a unit, and go back again three and four times. They're doctors and lawyers with incomes that don't match the pay they give you in the military, but they do it while their spouses and children try to survive back home.

Another difference is that when they come back home, they may not join The American Legion. We're not getting the young members because, with the economy, they may have to work two jobs. But we're hoping that they join so they understand what The American Legion can do for them. I just returned from appearing before Congress with Commander Koutz who spoke to the joint session of the Veterans Affairs Committee. If there are no veterans' organizations, no benefits will come to the veterans. When Congress asks us, "How is your membership?" they really just want to know if it's going down so they can cut benefits. So I plead with young members who have served in Iraq and Afghanistan to join.

Jonathan: So what is it that brings us all together as veterans despite the differences?

Jake: We do so much for the families of those who are currently serving. We had an individual who was over in Iraq and his wife was left to care for their son, who had spina bifida. She was constantly going to the hospital because of injuries to his back, and she couldn't afford a ramp in her house. So we called the local post where she lived, and The American Legion paid $5,000 to build a new ramp. Another example was a police officer I met at a rally. He told me his wife couldn't keep up with the bills while he was deployed, and they were behind by about $8,000. I told him to send me the bills, and he said, "Why?" I said, "Just send me the bills." We wrote out a check and caught them back up.

I could go on and on. We didn't need that aid in other wars because the economy was different, and many young people weren't even married. Families need more help today than in my time, and that's where The American Legion comes in. Now that's bonding.

Jake interviews **Jonathan**

Jake: Why did you join the Army?

Jonathan: My father is retired Army, so I grew up seeing the military clothing and hearing the stories. I graduated from high school in 1997 and didn't have a direction. I was looking at every different avenue, but the Army definitely wasn't one of them at first. After about seven or eight months of looking for a job, I told my father I was having trouble seeing what I wanted to do career-wise and he said, "Well, if you don't know what you want to do, I'd suggest joining the military. At least this way you can pass time while you earn great benefits and serve the nation."

Jake: How did you become an American Legion member?

Jonathan: It was actually when I started working for the VA. I had some personal claims for some injuries I incurred while on active duty that kept getting kicked back. One of the representatives who dealt with claims asked me if I was part of any nonprofit veteran organizations. I said no, but I remembered a couple of friends who had joined The American Legion, and he recommended that it was great in terms of supporting veterans. I also remembered the Legion through my father, and going to the local post in Corpus Christi, Texas, when I was a kid.

Continued on inside back cover

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Cadets make a comeback on Ivy League campuses

The Vietnam War in context

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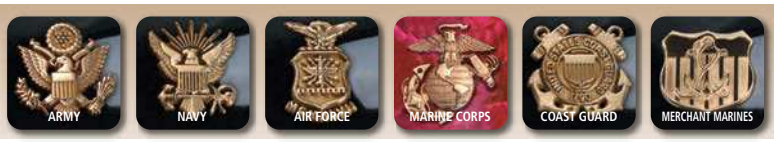

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ON THE COVER
Army ROTC cadets from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), Tufts University and Harvard University exercise at Harvard's McCurdy Track in Cambridge, Mass. Harvard lifted its four-decade ban on ROTC after last year's repeal of DoD's "don't ask, don't tell" policy. Photo by Dominick Reuter

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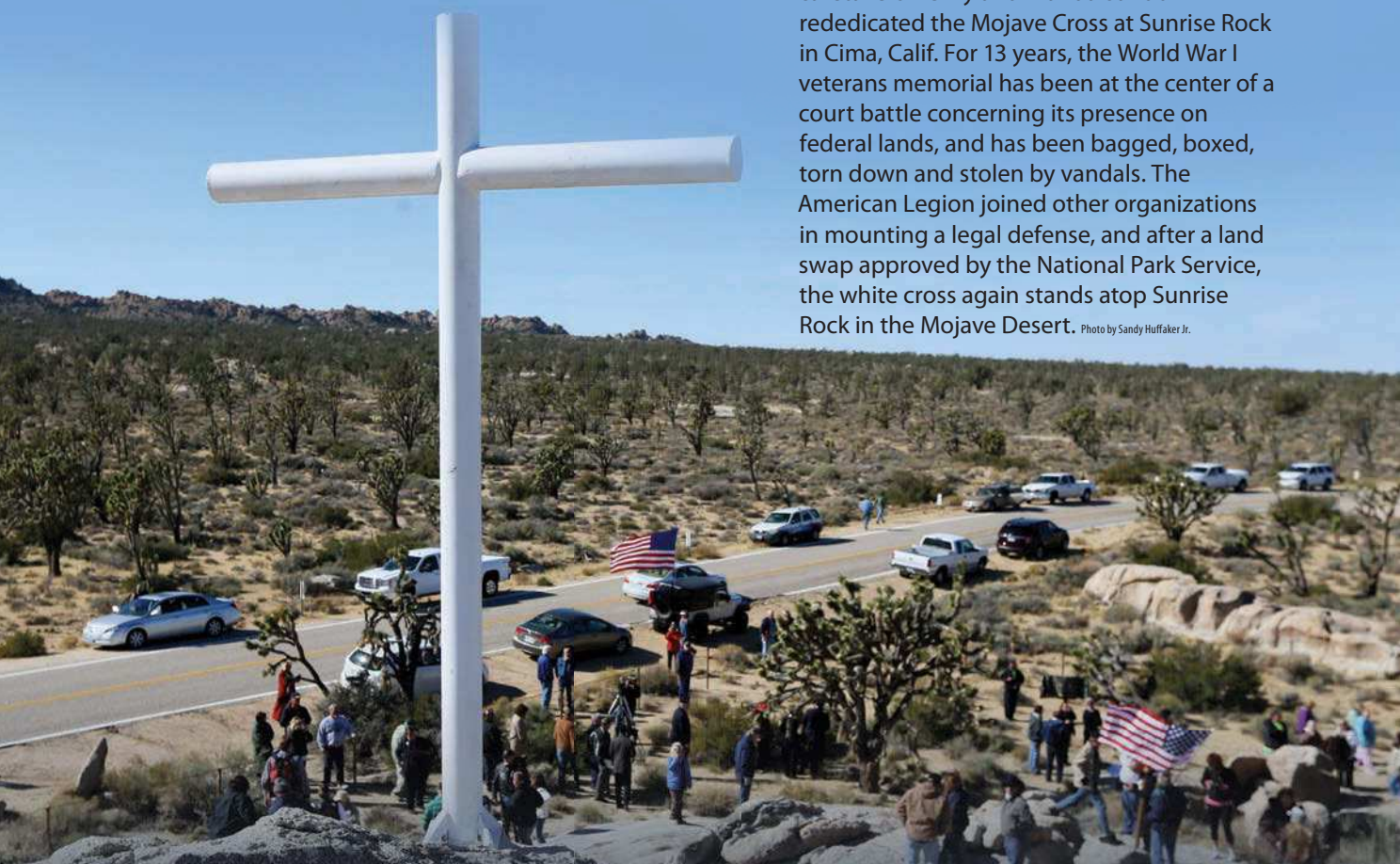
BACK WHERE IT BELONGS

On Veterans Day, Liberty Institute, VFW and caretakers Henry and Wanda Sandoz rededicated the Mojave Cross at Sunrise Rock in Cima, Calif. For 13 years, the World War I veterans memorial has been at the center of a court battle concerning its presence on federal lands, and has been bagged, boxed, torn down and stolen by vandals. The American Legion joined other organizations in mounting a legal defense, and after a land swap approved by the National Park Service, the white cross again stands atop Sunrise Rock in the Mojave Desert. Photo by Sandy Huffaker Jr.



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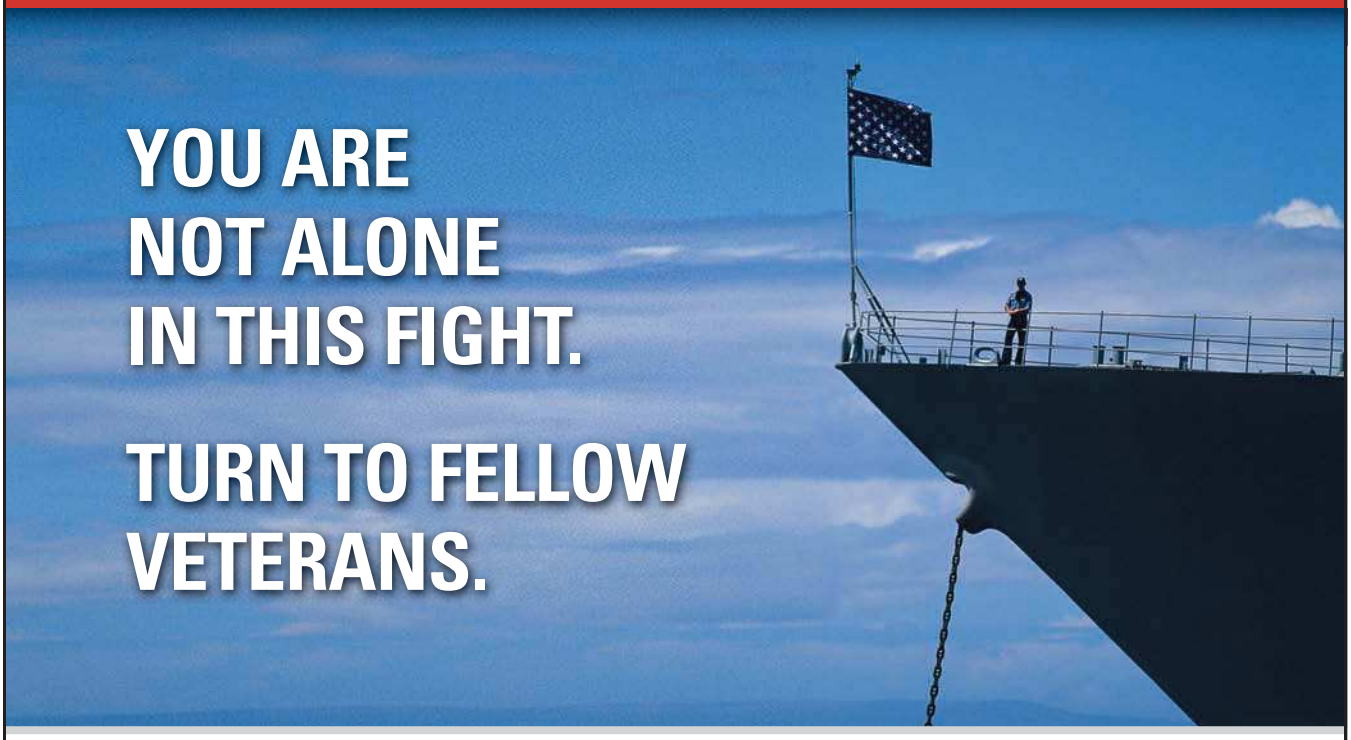

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'All Is Well, Safely Rest'

It was great to see Jari Villanueva's article on Taps (November). As a member of Bugles Across America, I attended the TAPS 150 weekend celebration at Berkeley Plantation in June. On Saturday night, all the buglers – some from as far away as California and Alaska – scattered themselves around the plantation much like those of the Army of the Potomac would have done in that summer of 1862. At 10 p.m., per Villanueva's direction, the buglers started sounding Taps. It was beautiful in the dark of night to hear the sound of this wonderful piece of music as it carried across the fields, through the woods and – I'm sure – over the waters of the James River. All that was missing were the campfires that would have been burning outside the tents of Union soldiers.

Villanueva is to be commended for all he has done to promote an awareness of Taps, its origin and meaning, and for making the historic TAPS 150 event happen.

– Paul Hobbs, Columbia, Mo.

I am a Taps player with the Northern Arizona Veterans Military Honor Color Guard. Years ago, I saw a post commander carrying a boombox to an event. I asked him what it was for and he replied, "Playing Taps," because there was no one to play the bugle.

I ordered a ceremonial bugle and make sure that someone has access to it if I'm out of town. I know some people don't approve of them, but standing 100 yards from the departed veteran and the family, playing after the rifle salute – it gives the illusion and effect, certainly more so than a boombox. I've had many compliments from family members about how great Taps sounded. I never tell them it's an electronic bugle. Why spoil the moment?

– William Velie, Flagstaff, Ariz.

I was drawn to the story of Taps but dismayed that its beautiful and moving words were not included. The music by itself doesn't convey what is felt by every military person when Taps is sounded.

– Glenn McKinney, Mentor, Ohio

Editor's note: Jari Villanueva's website – **www.tapsbugler.com** – explains that as soon as the Taps bugle call was sounded in July 1862, words were put to the music, the first being "Go to sleep, go to sleep." There are no official lyrics to Taps, but the following verses are the most popular:

Day is done, gone the sun,
From the lake, from the hill,
From the sky
All is well, safely rest,
God is nigh

Thanks and praise,
For our days,
'Neath the sun, 'neath the
stars, 'neath the sky,
As we go, this we know,
God is nigh

Fades the light, And afar
Goeth day, And the stars
Shineth bright,
Fare thee well, day has gone,
Night is on

Go to sleep, peaceful sleep,
May the soldier or sailor,
God keep
On the land or the deep,
Safe in sleep

Extension of Bush tax cuts

It never ceases to amaze me how Sen. Mitch McConnell can tailor his words so that middle-class Americans feel victimized (Big Issues, November). These are not increases, but the elimination of ill-advised tax cuts that have robbed the federal government of revenue. The sooner we realize that we must generate revenue to get the deficit under control, the better off we'll all be. The last citizens who need relief are those making more than $250,000 a year. McConnell's "job creators" are not the sole solution to the deficit or to the financial future of our country.

– Richard Collins, Sea Cliff, N.Y.

Sen. McConnell refers to annual GDP growth in 2010 as "an anemic 2.4 percent." He then refers to "an even more dismal 1.5 percent" GDP growth last quarter. I may not be a big-city economist, but don't you have to multiply a quarterly statistic by 4 to meaningfully compare it to an annual statistic? Growth of 1.5 percent per quarter over four quarters runs something like 6 percent in annual GDP growth. But I'm sure the good senator knows that.

– Howard Grantham, Las Vegas

In defending the Bush tax cuts, McConnell says that not extending the cuts would be bad for economic growth. He goes on to say that economic growth is worse now than it was before them. So by his own admission, the tax cuts didn't work.

– Rich Palombi, Brookfield, Ohio

It's a shame that Sen. Debbie Stabenow's comments were almost verbatim from the Obama campaign message – typical politics and scare tactics about how high earners don't pay enough in taxes. Many of us have worked diligently to start and grow businesses that employ thousands of Americans, at personal financial risk and sacrifice. To have someone who has not walked in my shoes promote a vision of shared sacrifice when she herself has not sacrificed is a disgrace.

– Evan Blanco, Naples, Fla.

The need for blood

The 2011 numbers for Legion blood donation (Memoranda, November) averaged out to just under 2 pints per donor. For whole-blood donation, a healthy veteran can donate up to 6 pints of whole blood per year, and far more for more valued platelets. I thank those who donated in 2011, and challenge them to add another pint or two in 2013, including some platelets. One more visit by each donor will add close to 50,000 needed pints of whole blood to the system.

– Peter Noyes, Duxbury, Mass.

'On the Brink'

Alan W. Dowd's article on the Cuban Missile Crisis (October) took me back 50 years. I was stationed at Fort Hood with the 1st Armored Division. We loaded equipment and ammunition on rail cars and received numerous shots, then boarded planes for Fort Stewart, Ga. From there, we convoyed to Hollywood, Fla., living in tents on a racetrack. We returned to Fort Hood in December. Today it's history, but I didn't know it then. I was just young, scared and really thankful for the ending.

– Melvin R. Mortier, Oconto, Wis.

This article opened a floodgate of memories for this old trooper. I served with the 1st Airborne Battle Group, 325th Infantry, 82nd Airborne. Our status was Immediate Ready Force (IRF), which meant that when the "go" signal was given, we had to be in the air in 30 minutes. When some of us were issued machetes to cut our way out of sugar cane fields and other dense vegetation, it was for real. All I could think was that at 20, I was going to get my first gold combat star to attach to my jump wings. But it wasn't to be. Later, I watched some documentaries on the crisis. The first wave of jumpers would have been cannon fodder for the Cuban soldiers. With our superior military, we would eventually have had the situation in hand, but not without a tremendous loss of lives.

– Ed Armstrong, Mechanicsburg, Pa.

The right kind of bias

Although my naval service was several years ago, my membership in The American Legion is quite recent. Your magazine seems refreshingly balanced and informative – unusual in these partisan times. Your bias appears to be in favor of the welfare and improvement of our great country, certainly one that I agree with. Keep up the excellent work.

– Herb Peterson, Tiburon, Calif.

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Be it resolved: Let's reverse the backlog

Over the years, I have known my share of resolutions. I'm not talking about the usual ones people make this time of year – lose weight, quit smoking, stick to a budget – but American Legion resolutions, the marching orders our members adopt to improve the lives of veterans, U.S. military personnel, families and communities everywhere.

Few topics have so frequently found their way into the Legion's portfolio of national resolutions as the backlog of undecided VA disability benefits claims. The problem is now counted in the hundreds of thousands. With veterans of the Iraq and Afghanistan wars pouring home and re-entering civilian life, the backlog continues to grow in both volume and complexity.

Many of these veterans have multiple service-connected conditions that will follow them for the rest of their lives. Others are going to VA seeking long-awaited help for conditions linked to Agent Orange exposure, previously untreated combat stress, or service-related issues that have worsened with age.

VA and the Legion agree that all veterans deserve timely decisions about disability benefits, and that the current logjam is intolerable.

More than 2,000 American Legion service officers work every day to help veterans correctly file for their benefits. VA has piloted many promising programs to accelerate the process. VA and DoD are working together to streamline medical records management and make the most of online tools. Progress is being made, but – as VA Secretary Eric Shinseki explained last summer – nearly 4 million VA claims have been adjudicated since 2009, including about 1 million in 2012 alone. Claims are coming in faster than VA and our service officers can keep up.

The American Legion, VA and DoD are committed to solving this problem. VA has targeted 2015 as the year to have no claims pending more than 125 days, with 98-percent accuracy. To help, the Legion is working with VA to ensure that innovations such as the Fully Developed Claims program (**www.benefits.va.gov/transformation/fastclaims**) are a success. This program reduces the need for adjudicators to provide additional instructions or request more documentation after a claim is filed and certified as complete, allowing for speedier decisions.

The Legion will also continue to provide boots-on-the-ground intelligence to help VA identify processing hang-ups throughout the country and highlight best practices at regional offices. Department service officers are working closely with VA and software programmers to strengthen technological solutions like the Veterans Benefits Management System. The Legion's Claims Coach smartphone app (**www.legion.org/mobileapps**) offers veterans organizational tools, answers to questions about benefits and a directory of service officers who can help.

The claims backlog is VA's biggest challenge, and the Legion is dedicated to helping bring it under control. It's going to take a concerted effort from everyone who cares about veterans and their families to keep us from having to make the same resolutions year after year.

James E. "Jim" Koutz

National Commander James E. Koutz

MEMORANDA

***DIGITAL* DISPATCH** News geared toward department and post leadership will be published on a new Web page, e-newsletter and new-look print publication. The print edition debuts this month.

The Web page houses stories that appear in the monthly *Dispatch*, as well as new features such as "Why I Love My Post" and columns from department service officers.
www.legion.org/dispatch

The monthly e-newsletter will guide readers to stories of interest on the Web page.
www.legion.org/subscribe

CLAIMS COACH The American Legion Claims Coach smartphone app provides veterans and their families with a free and useful tool to help with the VA claims process. The Legion's website has more information about the app and how to download it.
www.legion.org/mobileapps

HELP WARRIORS IN NEED
Commander James Koutz's main fundraising project is Operation Comfort Warriors (OCW). One hundred percent of donations go to purchasing items to help recovering warriors heal physically and mentally. You can donate at the Legion's website.
www.legion.org/ocw

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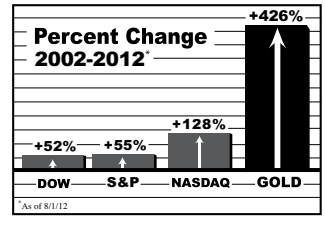

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PAUL J. HASSING

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BRANCH OF SERVICE: Army

YEARS: 16 (eight active, eight reserve)

MOS: 68S Preventive Medicine Sergeant / 15P Aviation Operations Sergeant / 12B Combat Engineer

RANK AT DISCHARGE: Staff sergeant (E-6)

DECORATIONS
- Army Commendation Medal (2)
- Army Achievement Medal (2)
- Good Conduct Medal (2)
- Military Outstanding Volunteer Service Medal
- Armed Forces Reserve Medal with mobilization device and 10-year hourglass (2)
- Overseas Service Ribbon (3)
- Army Reserve Components Achievement Medal (2)
- Iraq Campaign Medal with campaign star
- Aviation Badge
- Driver Badge

AMERICAN LEGION POST:
Earl C. Hill Post 550, Bloomington, Minn.

NUMBER OF YEARS IN THE LEGION: Six

OFFICES
- Post 581 commander (2007)
- Post 550 adjutant (2012)
- 10th District vice commander (2012)
- District employment chairman (2010-2012)
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Watch a video interview with Paul Hassing online:
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Rep. Mike Rogers, R-Mich.

■ Rogers is chairman of the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence.

OPPOSE

Rep. Zoe Lofgren, D-Calif.

■ Lofgren is a senior member of the House Judiciary Committee.

With the support of bipartisan majorities in the House of Representatives and the Senate, Congress passed the FISA Amendments Act in 2008. This legislation modernized the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act of 1978 to account for significant changes in technology and the threats facing our nation. Intelligence collected under this legislation is critical to our national security and to combating terrorism. However, this authority was scheduled to expire Dec. 31, leaving our intelligence agencies to try to collect intelligence on terrorists and foreign targets under 1970s-era laws.

Legislation to reauthorize this law enjoys broad bipartisan support in the executive branch, with the attorneys general and directors of national intelligence from two successive administrations – of different parties – expressing strong support, and in the House, where a reauthorization bill passed 301-118. That's more votes than the act received in 2008.

The FISA Amendments Act only authorizes intelligence collection against non-Americans located outside the United States. Moreover, it increases protections for Americans around the world by requiring a court order for any surveillance of an American, no matter where he or she is located – a significant change from prior U.S. government practice.

The Obama administration has stated that this authority is "vital in keeping the nation safe" and that failure to reauthorize the FISA Amendments Act "would result in a loss of significant intelligence and impede the ability of the intelligence community to respond quickly to new threats and intelligence opportunities."

This is a critical national security imperative.

THE HEART OF THE ISSUE

The House of Representatives voted to extend the law enabling intelligence agencies to conduct surveillance against terrorists without obtaining court orders. Critics say it doesn't adequately protect Americans' electronic communications.

Combating enemy agents or terrorists does not require sacrificing the Constitution's protection of Americans' freedom. With the original 1978 Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act (FISA), Congress established courts that are allowed to operate in secret, without compromising national security. But the Constitution still applies.

The founding fathers experienced abusive search-and-seizure tactics and wisely placed limits on this government power through the Fourth Amendment, which offers Americans security "against unreasonable searches" without warrants based firmly upon "probable cause."

The bill extending FISA, H.R. 5949, undermines those rights. Specifically, Section 702 would allow the government to amass a broad pool of data and conduct warrantless searches of the everyday communications of Americans. Supporters say access to this data would be subject to secret "minimization procedures" adopted by the attorney general and approved by the FISA court, but that's not the same as a warrant.

Senate Intelligence Committee members Ron Wyden, D-Ore., and Mark Udall, D-Colo., have said that the public "would be very surprised to learn how federal surveillance law is being interpreted in secret."

We didn't abandon our constitutional values when facing the Nazis and Imperial Japan in World War II or when confronting nuclear annihilation by the Soviet Union during the Cold War. We stood up for the freedoms guaranteed by our Constitution then, and we should do so now.

Safeguarding America should not come with a false choice between protection or liberty. We should fix the flaws in FISA before we extend it.

CONTACT YOUR ELECTED OFFICIALS

The Honorable *(name)*, U.S. Senate, Washington, DC 20510 • Phone: (202) 224-3121
The Honorable *(name)*, U.S. House of Representatives, Washington, DC 20515 • Phone: (202) 225-3121

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Millions of Americans have proudly served America when duty called, during times of peace and during times of war. And many – from the earliest days to World War II, Korea, Vietnam and to current day battles in the Gulf Region and Afghanistan – have paid the ultimate sacrifice for the principles that America stands for – freedom, liberty, and justice for all.

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There are three separate editions honoring America's soldiers, sailors, and airmen – each separate edition is issued in a strictly limited edition of 500 pistols per branch of the Armed Forces.

The right side features banners reading, "American Freedom Tribute" and, "Freedom is Never Free", a reminder that Americans need to be ever vigilant in protecting our freedoms and there is always a price to pay to protect our cherished freedoms. Each Armed Forces Tribute also features artwork unique to the branch honored (Soldiers, Sailors, or Airmen) depicting scenes related to the branch. (Sailor Edition shown above.)

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On the left side of each Tribute, prominently displayed as the focal point, there is an image of a soldier, sailor, or airmen framed with a patriotic banner. Additional artwork features a banner reading, "Saluting America's Armed Forces" and "Lest We Forget". Also featured is an outline of the USA framing "Freedom Forever", a reminder that our Armed Forces are always on duty protecting our cherished freedoms. Another banner reads, "Country Before Self", a reminder of the daily sacrifices our soldiers, sailors, and airmen make on behalf of all Americans.

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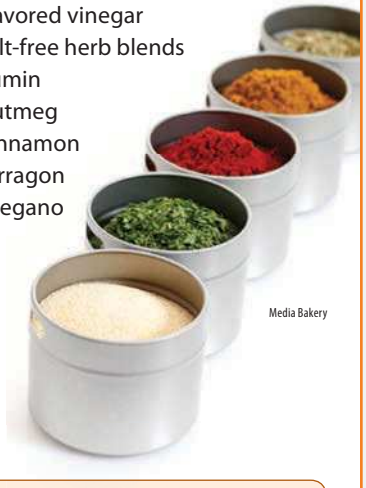
Beware salt substitutes

Many Americans suffering from high blood pressure try to manage their sodium intake by using salt substitutes. But these substitutes aren't a healthy option for everyone, the Cleveland Clinic reports. Some contain potassium chloride in place of sodium chloride, and potassium in excess can be harmful. Specifically, people who have kidney problems often have trouble processing and ridding their bodies of excess potassium. That's why the clinic recommends that people who have kidney problems or take medication for heart, kidney or liver disease check with a physician before using salt substitutes.

The clinic also encourages users to read ingredient labels, as some salt substitutes labeled "lite" or "low sodium" still contain sodium – just less than what's found in table salt.

Salt alternatives

Fresh garlic or garlic powder
Fresh ground pepper
Lemon juice
Flavored vinegar
Salt-free herb blends
Cumin
Nutmeg
Cinnamon
Tarragon
Oregano



Media Bakery

Living Well is designed to provide general information. It is not intended to be, nor is it, medical advice. Readers should consult their physicians when they have health problems.

SILENT KILLERS

Too many men are ignorant about male reproductive cancers.

BY MARTIN SAYERS

The threat to men's health from male-specific cancers is often underreported. The money available for research is limited, with funding for studying such cancers a fraction of that available for cervical and breast cancer. Yet there are various cancers that specifically affect men, and it is vital that men are aware of these threats, particularly as they tend to be less knowledgeable than women about their health and are less likely to seek a medical opinion when something is wrong.

Here is a guide to the most common and dangerous types of male-specific cancer:

PROSTATE CANCER Although small, the prostate can cause big problems. Prostate cancer is the most commonly diagnosed cancer among men and will affect one in six American males.

The prostate is a small walnut-sized gland found in the male reproductive system. It surrounds the first part of the urethra, the tube responsible for carrying urine and semen, and is crucial to the reproductive process as it manufactures an important liquifying component of semen. Fluid in the prostate contains large amounts of a substance known as prostate-specific antigen (PSA), which when mixed with semen allows sperm to move freely.

Symptoms of prostate cancer include difficulty in

starting to pass urine, a weak or sometimes intermittent flow, and a feeling that the bladder is never completely empty.

As with so many cancers, a family history of prostate cancer puts a man more at risk of developing it, but diet is also a factor. A diet high in fruits and vegetables and low in calcium and animal fats could act as a preventive measure. Tomatoes may help guard against prostate cancer because of the presence of lycopene, which is the pigment that makes tomatoes red and which may be a powerful cancer-fighting antioxidant.

TESTICULAR CANCER Whereas most cancers afflict older people, cancer of the testicles usually is found in young men and those in early middle age, with those 15 to 40 most at risk. It is the most common form of cancer for this age group, and rates have been increasing steadily since the 1970s. Some experts have suggested that the generally poor diet of men in this age group may have something to do with their proclivity toward developing the disease.

Testicular cancer is curable if diagnosed in its early stages, but undetected it can spread beyond the testes and regional lymph nodes to areas such as the lungs, liver, bones and brain. Given the importance of early detection of the disease, it is vital for men to conduct regular checks on their testicles, as 95 percent of cases originate from sperm-producing germ cells in the testes.

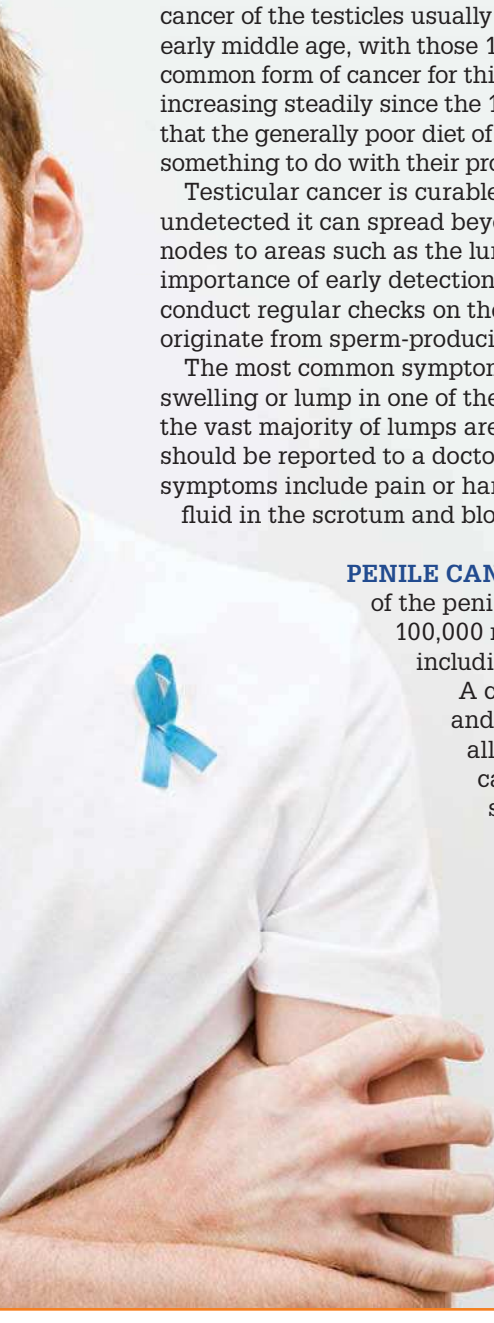
The most common symptom of testicular cancer is a painless swelling or lump in one of the testicles. This is not uncommon and the vast majority of lumps are not cancer, but any such symptom should be reported to a doctor as soon as possible. Other symptoms include pain or hardness in the testicles, a buildup of fluid in the scrotum and blood in the semen.

PENILE CANCER Although relatively rare, cancer of the penis still affects about one in every 100,000 men. It can cause devastating results, including death.

A change in the color of the penis, a red and velvety rash or a weeping sore could all be signs of the early onset of penile cancer. Anyone with these symptoms should immediately consult a doctor.

Like testicular cancer, penile cancer can spread, so it is important to treat it quickly. This usually means removal of the tumor, which is fairly straightforward if the condition has been spotted early. If not, a partial or total amputation of the penis may be necessary to stop the disease from spreading.

Martin Sayers is a freelance writer living in Cambridge, England. He specializes in health and nutrition issues.



Media Bakery

Here's to a healthier 2013

Health magazine has compiled a list of the healthiest New Year's resolutions:

Lose weight. This is always a popular resolution, but it's difficult to keep. "You can succeed if you don't expect overnight success," *Health* advises, warning dieters to avoid "quickie cures," use a food journal to track what they eat, and have a support system of friends and family "to get you through those rough times."

Stay in touch. Noting that "a lack of social bonds can damage your health as much as alcohol abuse and smoking," the magazine says that reconnecting with family and old friends can positively affect your health.

Quit smoking. *Health* encourages smokers "to try different methods to find out what works" – and when the cravings come, to use money as a motivator: "Think of the cash you'll save!"

Save money. Cutting costs is intertwined with a healthier lifestyle. Walking or riding a bike to work cuts down on gas and is good for your health. Canceling a gym membership and instead buying a fitness program for your video game system (like Nintendo's Wii Fit Plus or Wii Fit U, or Microsoft's Your Shape: Fitness Evolved for Xbox Kinect) "can get you sweating" *and* cut your spending.

Reduce stress. "If stress is chronic, it can increase your risk of – or worsen – insomnia, depression, obesity, heart disease and more." Stress triggers include long work hours, little sleep, lack of exercise, poor diet and lack of time with loved ones. Try relaxation, sleep, socializing and taking vacations.

The risks and rewards of

BARIATRIC SURGERY

BY MARK FUERST

More than one-third of American adults – more than 60 million – are considered obese, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's National Center for Health Statistics. At the same time, the number of weight-loss surgeries in the United States has risen by more than 30 percent.

"Bariatric surgery" is the term for operations to help promote weight loss, and is considered only for people with severe or "morbid" obesity, who have a body mass index (BMI) greater than 40 (about 100 pounds overweight) or greater than 35 (about 50 pounds overweight) with established complications of obesity.

Bariatric surgery leads not only to significant weight loss but to dramatic reductions in risk factors for cardiovascular disease. A review of nearly 20,000 patients found that high blood pressure was resolved or improved in nearly two-thirds of patients, diabetes in three-quarters of patients and high blood lipid levels in two-thirds of patients, nearly five years after surgery. The FDA recently approved Lap-Band surgery for patients with a BMI of 30 or higher who have poorly controlled diabetes or heart disease.

"There are trade-offs to both procedures," says James Rosser Jr., professor of surgery at Morehouse School of Medicine. "The gastric band is safer and is not permanent, but it gives less weight loss and is more prone to failure. The gastric bypass has a slightly higher serious complication rate, but has more durable weight loss and is more appropriate for patients who have a BMI over 50 and diabetes."

Most surgeons say these operations work best with lifelong behavioral and dietary changes. Candidates should find a hospital that performs a large number of these procedures to reduce the risk of complications and shorten their stay.

Mark Fuerst is a Brooklyn-based health and fitness writer.

Media Bakery

Three questions to ask when considering surgery

1. Do you have a BMI greater than 40, or greater than 35 with obesity-related disease that cannot be controlled through medication?
2. Are you unable to maintain significant weight loss through diet and exercise?
3. Are you ready to commit to lifelong behavioral changes for a healthy lifestyle?

The American Society for Metabolic & Bariatric Surgery offers a BMI calculator online:

asmbs.org/calculate-your-bmi

Types of bariatric surgery

Roux-en-Y gastric bypass surgery The size of the stomach is reduced to an egg-sized pouch, which is connected directly to the middle portion of the small intestine. Food then bypasses the rest of the stomach and the upper part of the small intestine.

How it works Bypassing part of the intestine reduces the food and nutrients absorbed, leading to weight loss. There is also an effect on hormones that influence hunger, which helps control weight.

Expectation 60 to 70 percent of excess body weight loss

Lap-Band or gastric band surgery The size of the opening from the esophagus to the stomach is reduced by an adjustable band.

How it works Since the stomach is smaller, you feel full quickly and eat less.

Expectation 40 to 50 percent of excess body weight loss

Gastric sleeve resection This less-common procedure removes most of the stomach, converting it into a narrow tube. Long-term outcomes from this procedure have not been studied.

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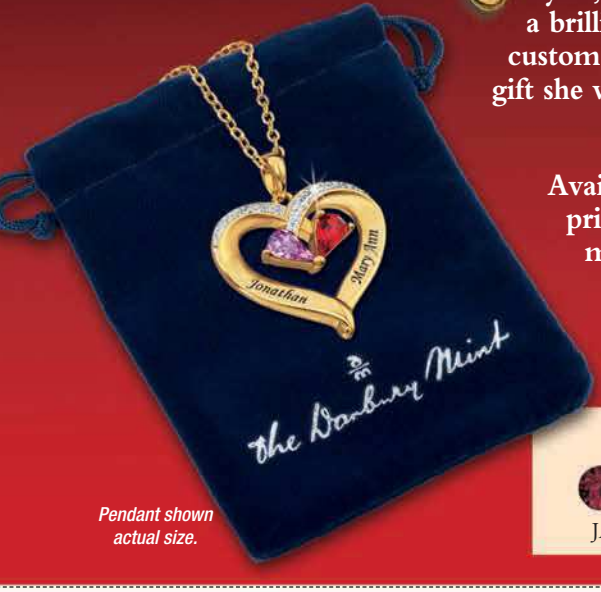

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Remote TRICARE users to lose managed care

BY TOM PHILPOTT

Up to 240,000 military retirees and dependents will likely be pushed out of the TRICARE Prime military managed care program this year – and not because of budget sequestration or the debt crisis.

Beneficiaries can instead blame Department of Defense health officials who five years ago quietly made changes to a third generation of TRICARE support contracts, on which Prime networks of civilian providers are built.

Those affected reside more than 40 miles from a military treatment facility or an area where a military base was closed or downsized during the Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) process.

These beneficiaries in "remote" TRICARE Prime areas will see their networks of civilian providers dismantled, DoD officials have told Congress. Many patients likely will get to keep their care providers if they choose. But they will be forced to use TRICARE Standard, the military's fee-for-service insurance option, instead of TRICARE Prime. That will mean an increase in out-of-pocket costs for frequent users of health services.

Photo by Carrie E. David

Under TRICARE Prime, beneficiaries receive managed care from a network of providers for a fixed annual enrollment fee. For 2012, it was $269.28 for individuals or $538.56 for families, plus a $12 co-pay for each doctor visit.

Under TRICARE Standard, beneficiaries choose their own physicians and pay no annual enrollment fee. But when they need care, they must cover 25 percent of allowable charges. They also pay an annual deductible of $150 per individual or $300 per family. Total out-of-pocket costs, however, can't exceed a $3,000-per-family catastrophic cap.

When TRICARE Prime began in 1996, DoD officials assumed that managed care would save money for the department over TRICARE Standard (the old CHAMPUS program renamed). So the first two generations of TRICARE support contracts offered incentives to companies such as Humana to establish Prime networks beyond the 40-mile catchment areas. For South Region states, for example, Humana offered access to Prime networks everywhere.

Experience has shown, however, that Prime adds costs to the system. So TRICARE officials decided to return Prime to its original concept of being a backup network only for military clinics and hospitals or BRAC sites.

The new generation of support contracts removes the incentives for maintaining Prime networks beyond base catchment areas. Officials expected to make the shift for all three regions simultaneously, but that hasn't been possible until now because of delays in finalizing contract awards. But contracts for every region are now settled, and the shift is expected to occur April 1 in the West Region – to coincide with UnitedHealth Military & Veterans Services taking over the TriWest Healthcare Alliance – and by Oct. 1 in the North and South regions, when current Prime enrollment periods expire.

A congressional source said that TRICARE officials recently raised the estimate on the number of beneficiaries impacted from 171,000 to somewhere between 225,000 and 240,000. In areas where both Prime and Standard are now offered, about half of beneficiaries are already choosing to use Standard.

Active-duty members and their families currently pay no enrollment fees or co-pays under TRICARE Prime, and those living far from a military base have access to an unaffected program, TRICARE Prime Remote. Drilling Guardsmen and reservists could see small cost increases if they have been getting fee discounts for using network providers under TRICARE Reserve Select. If the networks end, so will the discounts.

Protest of the move has begun in Congress, but finding the money to stop it will be difficult.

Tom Philpott, a former Coast Guardsman, has written about veterans and military personnel issues for more than 30 years.

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why we went to war in VIETNAM

interpretation evolves about america's most controversial war.

BY MICHAEL LIND

In the decades after the departure of the last U.S. combat troops from Vietnam in March 1973 and the fall of Saigon to communist North Vietnamese forces in April 1975, Americans have been unable to agree on how to characterize the long, costly and ultimately unsuccessful U.S. military involvement in Indochina. To some, the Vietnam War was a crime – an attempt by the United States to suppress a heroic Vietnamese national liberation movement that had driven French colonialism out of its country. To others, the Vietnam War was a forfeit, a just war needlessly lost by timid policymakers and a biased media. For many who study foreign affairs, the Vietnam War was a tragic mistake brought about by U.S. leaders who exaggerated the influence of communism and underestimated the power of nationalism.

Another interpretation, a fourth one, has recently emerged, now that the Vietnam War is history and can be studied dispassionately by scholars with greater, though not unlimited, access to records on all sides.

Combat helicopters of the 1st Air Cavalry Division fly over a radio telephone operator and his commander during Operation Pershing, a search-and-destroy mission on the Bong Son Plain and An Lao Valley in South Vietnam on Jan. 3, 1967. Photo by Patrick Christain/Getty Images

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the first americans killed in vietnam

Lt. Col. Peter Dewey, Sept. 26, 1945

Dewey led a seven-man Office of Strategic Services (OSS) team to search for missing U.S. pilots and to gather information on the situation in Vietnam after Japan's surrender. In his last report, he wrote: "Cochinchina (South Vietnam) is burning; the French and British are finished here, and we ought to clear out of Southeast Asia." Dewey was gunned down on the way to the Saigon airport by Viet Minh (precursor to the Viet Cong) soldiers, who apparently mistook him for a French officer. His body was never recovered.

James B. McGovern Jr. (pictured) and Wallace Buford, May 6, 1954

Known as "Earthquake McGoon" for a character in the "Li'l Abner" comic strip, McGovern was a former World War II ace who volunteered as a transport pilot for the Civil Air Transport (CAT) secretly run by the CIA. He and his co-pilot, Wallace Buford, were attempting to resupply a besieged French garrison at Dien Bien Phu when ground fire from the Viet Minh crippled their C-119. The plane crashed into a hillside in Laos, killing both men and a French crew chief. McGovern's remains were recovered from an unmarked grave in Laos in 2002 and identified in 2006. He is buried in Arlington National Cemetery.

Tech. Sgt. Richard B. Fitzgibbon Jr., June 8, 1956

Serving in Vietnam as a member of the Military Assistance Advisory Group (MAAG), Fitzgibbon was murdered by another U.S. airman. His son, Marine Lance Cpl. Richard B. Fitzgibbon III, was killed in action in Quang Tin, South Vietnam, on Sept. 7, 1965. They are one of two confirmed father-son pairs to die in the war.

Capt. Harry G. Cramer Jr., Oct. 21, 1957

A wounded combat veteran of the Korean War, Cramer led a team of Green Berets in training South Vietnamese soldiers. He was killed in an explosion near Nha Trang that the Army labeled a training accident. Cramer's comrades claimed that his death was caused by Viet Cong mortar rounds.

Maj. Dale R. Buis and Master Sgt. Chester M. Ovnand, July 8, 1959

Six guerrillas struck the MAAG compound in Bien Hoa north of Saigon, shooting Buis and Ovnand as they watched a movie on a home projector.

Spc. 4 James T. Davis, Dec. 22, 1961

Assigned to the 3rd Radio Research Unit at Tan Son Nhut Air Base, Davis was killed in a Viet Cong ambush near the old French garrison of Cau Xang. President Lyndon Johnson later called Davis "the first American to fall in the defense of our freedom in Vietnam," though historians clarify that he was the first battlefield fatality.

The emerging scholarly synthesis interprets the war in the global context of the Cold War that lasted from the aftermath of World War II to the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 and the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991. In this view, Vietnam was neither a crime, a forfeit nor a tragic mistake. It was a proxy conflict in the Cold War.

The Cold War was the third world war of the 20th century – itself part of what some have called the Long War or the Seventy-Five Years' War of 1914-1989. Unlike the first two world wars, the Cold War began and ended without direct military conflict between the opposing sides, thanks to the deterrent provided by conventional forces as well as nuclear weapons. Instead, it was fought indirectly through economic embargoes, arms races, propaganda and proxy wars in peripheral nations like Vietnam.

The greatest prizes in the Cold War were the industrial economies of the advanced European and East Asian nations, most of all Germany and Japan. With the industrial might of demilitarized Japan and the prosperous western half of a divided Germany, the United States could hope to carry out its patient policy of containment of a communist bloc that was highly militarized but economically outmatched, until the Soviets sued for peace or underwent internal reform. The Soviet Union could prevail in the Cold War only if it divided the United States from its industrialized allies – not by sponsoring communist takeovers within their borders but by intimidating them into appeasement after convincing them that the United States lacked the resolve or the ability to defend its interests.

For this reason, most crises of the Cold War, from the Berlin Airlift and the Cuban Missile Crisis to the Korean and Vietnam wars, occurred when the United States responded to aggressive probing by communist bloc nations with dramatic displays of American resolve. The majority of these tests of American credibility took place in four countries divided between communist and non-communist regimes after World War II: Germany, China, Korea and Vietnam.

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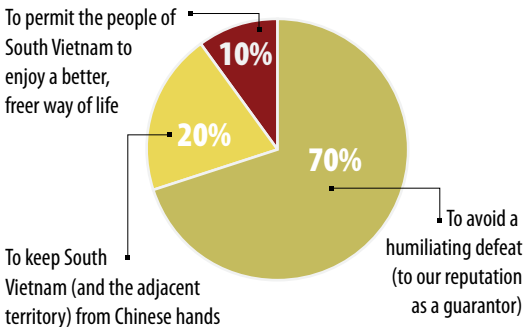
In an internal Johnson administration memo of March 1965, Assistant Secretary of Defense John McNaughton emphasized credibility as the most important of several U.S. objectives in Vietnam:


To permit the people of South Vietnam to enjoy a better, freer way of life
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20%
70%
To avoid a humiliating defeat (to our reputation as a guarantor)
To keep South Vietnam (and the adjacent territory) from Chinese hands

In a speech the following month, President Johnson stressed America's reputation as a guarantor: "Around the globe, from Berlin to Thailand, are people whose well-being rests, in part, on the belief that they can count on us if they are attacked. To leave Vietnam to its fate would shake the confidence of all these people in the value of America's commitment, the value of America's word."

Full-scale war was avoided despite repeated crises involving divided Berlin and Taiwan, where the remnant of China's Nationalist government took refuge after the 1949 victory of Mao Zedong's communists in China. The Cold War soon turned hot in divided Korea and Vietnam.

What Americans call the Vietnam War was the second of three wars in Indochina during the Cold War, in which the United States, the Soviet Union and the People's Republic of China intervened in shifting patterns of enmity and alliance. None of these would have occurred in the form that they did if Mao's communists had not come to power in China in 1949. Although the regimes in Moscow and Beijing were enemies of one another by the end of the Cold War, in the conflict's early years the triumph of the Chinese communists created a powerful Sino-Soviet bloc that opposed the United States and its allies around China's periphery: Korea, Taiwan and Vietnam. Direct Chinese military intervention in the Korean War ensured a bloody stalemate rather than reunification of the peninsula under a non-communist regime. At the same time, indirect Chinese and Soviet support in the First Indochina War (1946-1954) helped Ho Chi Minh's communists drive the French from their former colony.

Only a few years after the Geneva Accords in 1954 established the 17th parallel as the boundary between Vietnam's communist north and non-communist south, the Hanoi regime resumed war by means of infiltration and southern insurgents. After the conquest of the south in 1975, Communist Party historian Nguyen Khac Vien admitted, "The Provisional Revolutionary Government was always simply a group emanating from the DRV (Democratic Republic of Vietnam). If we had pretended otherwise for such a long period, it was only because during the war we were not obliged to unveil our cards."

The assassination in 1960 of South Vietnam's dictator, Ngo Dinh Diem, created anarchy that led to rising U.S. involvement – starting with advisers under President Kennedy, then turning to bombing and ultimately large-scale ground forces under Johnson. In 1964, the Johnson administration won congressional passage of the Southeast Asia Resolution after the Gulf of Tonkin incident, using as a pretext for U.S. military intervention the confrontation in which North Vietnam fired on the USS *Maddox*. The number of American forces peaked in 1968, when more than half a million U.S. troops were waging war in South Vietnam, as well as bombing North Vietnam and taking part in incursions into Laos and Cambodia. At great cost in American and Vietnamese lives, the attrition strategy of Gen. William Westmoreland succeeded in preventing the Saigon regime from being overthrown by insurgents. The Tet Offensive of January 1968, perceived in the United States as a setback for American war aims, was in fact a devastating military setback for the north. Thereafter, North Vietnam's only hope was to conquer South Vietnam by means of conventional military campaigns, which the United States successfully thwarted.

In the United States, public opinion grew opposed to the costs in blood and treasure of the controversial war. President Richard Nixon sought to achieve "peace with honor" by combining a policy of "Vietnamization," or South Vietnamese self-reliance, with a policy of détente with the Soviet Union and China, in the hope that the communist powers would pressure the north into ending the war. His strategy failed. Following the Paris Peace Accords of 1973, U.S. combat forces were removed, and the south, deprived by Congress of military aid, was invaded by the north. In 1975, upon uniting Vietnam under their rule in 1975, the victorious heirs of Ho Chi Minh

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Marines of Company E, 2nd Battalion, 9th Marines, evacuate a wounded comrade while under heavy fire in the demilitarized zone during Operation Hickory III on July 29, 1967. National Archives/AFP/Getty Images

imposed Marxist-Leninist totalitarianism on the south and helped their allies win power in Laos. The Third Indochina War soon followed. Mao's heirs in China viewed communist Vietnam as a Soviet satellite on their border, and in early 1979 China invaded Vietnam in a brief war, following the 1978 Vietnamese invasion and occupation of Cambodia, during which Vietnamese communists ousted the Chinese-backed regime of the murderous Pol Pot.

Of the three great powers that intervened in Indochina after the ouster of France in the 1950s, the Soviet Union gained the most. By backing Hanoi, Moscow simultaneously obtained an ally on China's border and reasserted its leadership of international Marxism-Leninism. The former U.S. base at Cam Ranh Bay became the largest Soviet military installation outside Eastern Europe. In "The Soviet Union and the Vietnam War" (1996), Russian historian Ilya Gaiduk wrote, "Inspired by its gains and by the decline of U.S. prestige resulting from Vietnam and domestic upheaval, the Soviet leadership adopted a more aggressive and rigid foreign policy, particularly in the Third World."

But in December 1979, only months after China was humiliated in its brief war with Moscow's Vietnamese ally, the Soviet Union invaded Afghanistan. That decade-long conflict proved to be Moscow's Vietnam.

Just as the Soviets and Chinese had armed and equipped Vietnamese opponents of U.S. forces in Vietnam, the United States and China – now allies against Moscow – armed and equipped the insurgents who fought the Soviet occupiers of Afghanistan. The Soviet war in Afghanistan was the third major proxy war in the Cold War.

In 1989, the year in which the Berlin Wall fell and the Cold War effectively ended, the Soviet Union withdrew from Afghanistan, as the United States had withdrawn its troops from Indochina a decade and a half earlier.

The United States lost the proxy war in Indochina but prevailed on a global level in the Cold War. The USSR not only lost the Cold War but ceased to exist in 1991. The discredited secular creed of Marxism-Leninism has survived in only a few dictatorships, including China, North Korea and Vietnam.

As the narrative of the 20th century is interpreted, historians are regarding the Vietnam War in a global context that spans decades and concludes with the fall of the Soviet Union. No matter their differences of perspective, they will define the Vietnam War as the Cold War in Indochina.

The interventions of the United States, the Soviet Union and China turned civil wars in Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia into proxy wars. This provides an answer to those who claim that the United States, by its intervention, mistakenly turned a pure civil war in Vietnam into part of the Cold War. The United States shared its belief that Indochina was a major theater in the global Cold War with the Soviet Union and China. As Lien-Hang T. Nguyen writes in "Hanoi's War: An International History of the War for Peace in Vietnam": "While Moscow hoped to see Soviet technology defeat American arms in Vietnam, Beijing wanted to showcase the power of Mao's military strategy on the Vietnamese battlefield."

There is no evidence that Ho Chi Minh or his successors ever envisioned the kind of neutrality that Yugoslavia's communist dictator Josip Broz Tito pursued during the Cold War. On the contrary, the North Vietnamese communists identified themselves with the main communist bloc of nations, sought to maintain the support of the Soviets and the Chinese alike, and by the end of the Cold War had turned their country into the Soviet Union's major Asian ally.

Was South Vietnam too marginal an interest to justify a U.S. war in the 1960s and 1970s? To this day, the United States garrisons South Korea and provides arms to Taiwan. If you consider that in today's world, the United States could go to war if China attacks Taiwan and almost certainly would go to war if North Korea attacks South Korea, the use of U.S. military force to defend South Vietnam against North Vietnam at the height of the Cold War seems less puzzling. Indeed, a U.S.

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decision in the 1960s not to try to avert a communist takeover of South Vietnam would need explanation.

Viewing the Indochina wars as Cold War proxy wars, along with the conflicts of that era in Korea and Afghanistan, answers one set of critics: the realists. It also provides an answer to other critics who claim that the United States should have been more aggressive toward North Vietnam. In 1978, Adm. William Sharp wrote, "Why were we not permitted to win? In my view, it was partly because political and diplomatic circles in Washington were disproportionately concerned with the possibility of Chinese and Soviet intervention."

The late Col. Harry Summers Jr. argued that the United States allowed itself "to be bluffed by China throughout most of the war."

Undermining this critique is the fact that China and the Soviet Union played a much greater role in the Vietnam War than Americans realized at the time. Fifty percent of all Soviet foreign aid went to North Vietnam between 1965 and 1968. Soviet anti-aircraft teams in North Vietnam brought down dozens of U.S. planes. According to former Soviet colonel Alexei Vinogradov, "The Americans knew only too well that Vietnamese planes of Soviet design were often flown by Soviet pilots."

China's indirect role in Vietnam was even more massive and critical. It is now known that in a secret meeting between Ho Chi Minh and Mao in the summer of 1965, China agreed to enter the war directly if the United States invaded North Vietnam. As it was, China's indirect involvement in Vietnam was its greatest military effort after the Korean War. According to Beijing, between 1965 and 1973, there were 320,000 Chinese troops assigned to North Vietnam, with a maximum of 170,000 – roughly a third of the maximum number of U.S. forces – in the south at their peak. On Sept. 23, 1968, Mao asked North Vietnamese premier Pham Van Dong, "Why have the Americans not made a fuss about the fact that more than 100,000 Chinese troops help you building railways, roads and airports although they know about it?"

Historian Chen Jian concludes that "without the support, the history, even the outcome of the Vietnam War, might have been different."

Nobody can ever prove that the People's Liberation Army would have fought U.S. troops directly if the United States had invaded North Vietnam. But the depth of China's involvement in the war suggests that U.S. policymakers were being prudent, not pusillanimous, when they worried that China would send troops to fight directly in Vietnam as it had done in Korea. Reviewing the evidence, historian Qiang Zhai concludes, "If the actions recommended by (Col. Harry) Summers had been taken by Washington in Vietnam, there would have been a real danger of a Sino-American war with dire consequences for the world. In retrospect, it appears that Johnson had drawn the correct lesson from the Korean War and had been prudent in his approach to the Vietnam conflict."

From today's perspective, the Vietnam War looks less like a senseless blunder on the part of the United States than like a replay of the Korean War in a different region with a different outcome. Elsewhere in Asia, including the Philippines, Malaya and Indonesia, communist insurgencies were defeated by local governments, sometimes with the help of British or French advisers and combat troops. It may be that those insurgencies failed, while communist regimes survived in part of Korea and unified Vietnam, because of one factor: the absence of a land border with post-1949 communist China, which provided material support, manpower and deterrence of a U.S. escalation that might risk wider war with China.

Ever since the fall of Saigon, Americans have sought to draw lessons from Vietnam, but some have been short-lived. In the late 20th century, U.S. policymakers and military strategists, hoping to put the memory of Vietnam behind them, focused on swift, high-tech warfare against technologically advanced adversaries – only to painfully relearn forgotten lessons in Iraq and Afghanistan about counterinsurgency and nation-building.

In the aftermath of Vietnam, the United States sought to put Asian conflicts behind it. But the recently announced "pivot" away from the Middle East toward Asia is widely viewed as an American strategy of containing China, with which the United States fought bloody proxy wars in Vietnam and Korea in living memory. In a Sino-American conflict in the 21st century, Vietnam might even be an American ally.

As a historical event, the Vietnam War is an unchanging part of the past. As a symbol, it will continue to evolve, reflecting the values and priorities of later generations. In discussing and debating the nation's most controversial war, Americans would do well to remember the words of the poet T.S. Eliot: "There is no such thing as a Lost Cause, because there is no such thing as a Gained Cause."

Michael Lind is the author of "Vietnam: The Necessary War."

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Reported by J. Page

CHICAGO: A local board-certified Ear, Nose, Throat (ENT) physician, Dr. S. Cherukuri, has just shaken up the hearing aid industry with the invention of a medical-grade, affordable hearing aid. **This revolutionary hearing aid is designed to help millions of people with hearing loss who cannot afford—or do not wish to pay—the much higher cost of traditional hearing aids.**

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BY PHILIP M. CALLAGHAN

Soldiers of Delta Company, 3rd Infantry – the "Old Guard" – photograph headstones at Arlington National Cemetery in a massive effort to check burial locations against records. Photo by J.D. Leipold

PHELPS. No one knows much about him. He had family in Massachusetts. He gave his life fighting for the Union in the Civil War. Beyond that, Arlington National Cemetery has nothing else about him.

Graves such as his are the inspiration behind the cemetery's new motto: "Honor. Remember. Explore."

Since 1864, Arlington has been dedicated to the first two words. Now, the cemetery is going a step further, inviting exploration of the historic military cemetery even if a personal visit is not possible.

Arlington National Cemetery has launched ANC Explorer, an online tool and mobile app that allows users to visit the nation's most famous cemetery from their computers or mobile devices. Front-and-back images of every headstone, monument, memorial and plaque on Arlington's 624 acres are contained within the app. Name, rank, branch of service, birth and death dates, and other information can also be found. The digital offering is a two-way street. Those who use the new online tools can help the cemetery learn more about those who are laid to rest there.

"We're going to have more than 300,000 people looking at our website to help us find more," says Kathryn Condon, ANC's executive director. "Wouldn't we like to find out more about who Phelps is? What we really want to do is open up to the American public, to help us find the true history of each and every headstone that's here."

A NEW CLIMATE. Condon and ANC's superintendent, Patrick Hallinan, started their jobs amid a scandal. Highly publicized revelations about the misidentification of remains, antiquated record-keeping and mismanagement at the cemetery's highest levels prompted an investigation by the Army's inspector general in August 2009. Three months later, Secretary of the Army John McHugh ordered a second investigation.

Findings included a lack of accountability for remains, unmarked or improperly marked grave sites, and the mishandling of cremated remains.

ANC's mission had been compromised by "dysfunctional management, a lack of established policy and procedures, and an overall unhealthy organizational climate," McHugh said in a 2010 press conference. "That all ends today."

Keenly aware that the eyes of an angry public were upon them, Condon and Hallinan lost no time in getting to work. On the same day McHugh addressed the media, they told ANC workers that they must hit the ground running and leave the past behind.

"We needed to move forward and do things correctly," says Hallinan, former director of funeral programs for the National Cemetery Administration. "There was no room for error. I don't think that Congress or the American people had the patience for any more errors."

Condon, who previously held the senior civilian position at Army Materiel Command, remembers the staff meeting well. She told the employees that she knew "absolutely nothing about running a cemetery, 'but that's why each and every one of you is here. You have made your careers out of running a cemetery. But I do know how to run a large Army organization.' That was it, and we would be in this together."

As news of Arlington's previous mismanagement spread, its offices were flooded with phone calls from people concerned that their loved ones might be buried in the wrong graves. A hotline was established, and Condon, Hallinan and other ANC managers spoke with concerned families from all over America, often late into the night.

The cemetery's transformation centered on what Hallinan calls the "Three Rs" – reorganize, retrain and retool. Arlington would follow the Army's standard operating procedures, provide staff and workers with the training they need, and improve or obtain the tools – from backhoes to smartphone maps – to accomplish the mission.

He and Condon had to change Arlington's culture. Prior to their arrival, the cemetery had no checklist for standard procedures, no consistent supervision of workers, little training, and shortfalls in accountability and responsibility.

"The big items for a healthy and dynamic organization were lacking, and that's a personal responsibility of the leadership," Hallinan says. "We hold ourselves to higher standards. People have to believe you have that credibility before they follow you, and that's how you build that trust and faith – with the employees or with the American people."

Condon says the situation began to improve when the cemetery went back to following DoD procedures already in place.

"What (Hallinan) and I have focused on is putting together processes, from how we do IT to how we do fiscal management, contracting and the operational side of business," Condon says. "I don't think it was because of bureaucracy that (ANC) failed. I think the lack of standards in a bureaucracy is probably what happened."

UNDERSTAND THE OPERATION.

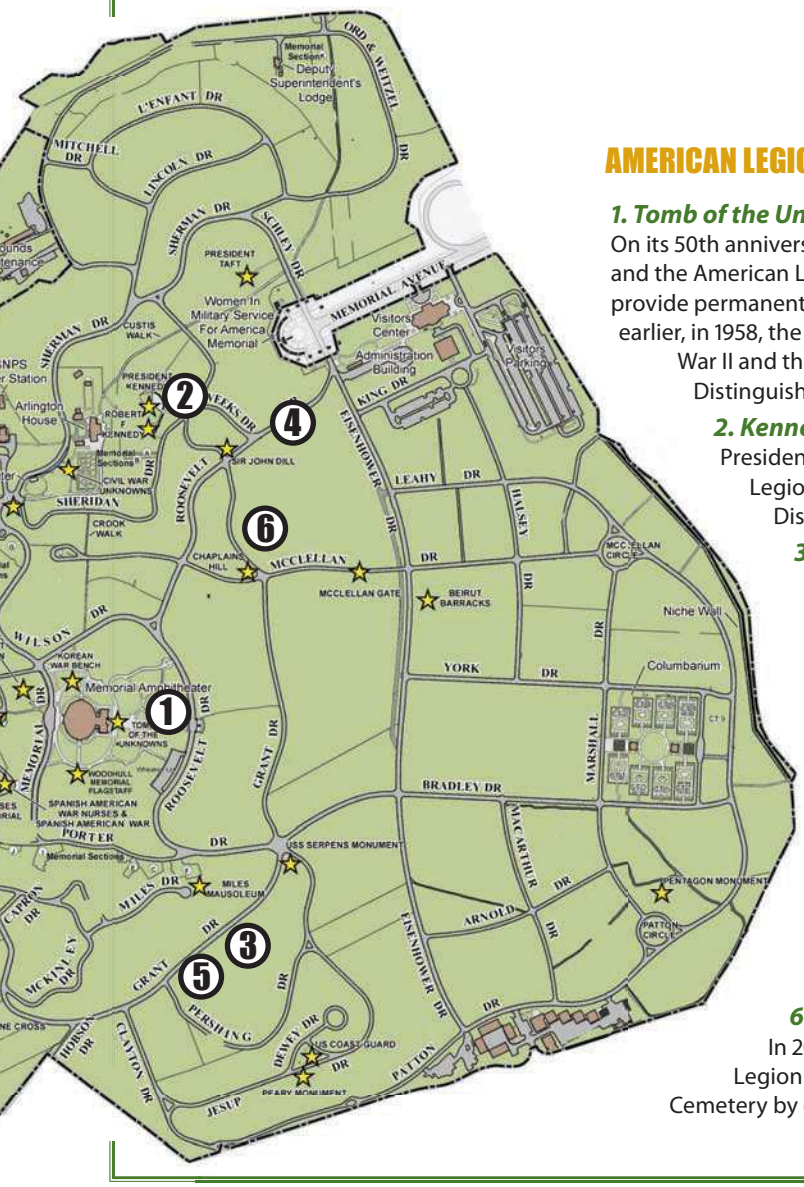
Hallinan and Condon quickly realized that employee training had not been a priority at Arlington National Cemetery. For example, a backhoe operator employed for 29 years had never received formal instruction. In general, ANC's managers failed to keep up with training their staff for work performed year after year.

Since 2010, nearly every senior equipment operator and truck driver at ANC has been trained. Cemetery staff members have also been given formal grief-counseling training, and the work of outside contractors is closely monitored and held to higher standards.

Each member of the ANC workforce now has an individual development plan, and their supervisors are held accountable for proper training. Condon says the workers are also cross-trained in other jobs. "You have to understand the operation, and the operation here is to honor the fallen," she says.

That includes a chain of custody for the burial of remains, and Arlington now has the strictest process in the nation. On the day of interment, the remains of a veteran or servicemember arrive in an urn or casket. They are signed over from the family or a funeral director to an ANC representative, who then meets with family members and goes over all the information provided by phone or email, such as name, rank and date of death. That representative stays with the family throughout the entire process.

Every casket or urn receives a permanent tag for future identification, which is checked against the temporary marker at the grave site. Identification numbers are painted on the concrete grave or urn liners. When a casket is lowered into its grave, the



AMERICAN LEGION POINTS OF INTEREST AT ARLINGTON

1. Tomb of the Unknowns

On its 50th anniversary, The American Legion contributed $75,000, and the American Legion Auxiliary $25,000, as a gift to the nation to provide permanent lighting at the Tomb of the Unknowns. A decade earlier, in 1958, the Legion paid tribute to the unknown fallen of World War II and the Korean War by bestowing upon them the Distinguished Service Medal.

2. Kennedy's Eternal Flame

President John F. Kennedy, a World War II Navy veteran and Legionnaire from Post 281 in Boston, received the Legion's Distinguished Service Medal in 1961.

3. Cpl. Frank Buckles

The longest-surviving U.S. veteran of World War I, and a Legion member for more than 75 years, Buckles lived to the age of 110 before passing away in 2011.

4. Gen. George C. Marshall

Before he became known as the architect of Europe's post-World War II reconstruction, Marshall received the Legion's Distinguished Service Medal in 1942.

5. Gen. John J. Pershing

One of The American Legion's earliest supporters, Pershing authorized the gathering in Paris in March 1919 that laid the groundwork for the new wartime veterans organization.

6. Chaplains Hill

In 2011, The American Legion and Sons of The American Legion helped correct an omission at Arlington National Cemetery by dedicating a plaque honoring Jewish chaplains.

supervisor checks the casket tag and temporary marker for accuracy before signing for the remains from the funeral representative.

"Those are just the checks on the day of interment," Hallinan says. "Prior to that, a supervisor will go out to the grave site and validate the location, and the equipment operator goes out to make sure he'll be digging at the right site."

Before the cemetery closes, all temporary markers are checked again for grave sites completed that day.

A FAREWELL TO PAPER. Until 2010, Arlington National Cemetery used a system of index cards and paper charts to keep track of remains in about 260,000 grave sites and urn niches.

"We were using index cards and typing on them to update the burial records," says Army Maj. Nick Miller, ANC's chief information officer. "Now everything is electronically generated, from the first call into our call center until we set the headstone and GPS it with 3-inch accuracy. So we really have an audit trail of the burial record, and who is working on that burial record."

And instead of rooting through more than 400,000 paper records to find a bit of information, staff members now conduct simple searches that deliver data instantly, Miller says.

ANC staff also use a bird's-eye-view digital map of the cemetery to plan routes for funeral processions, which occur about 100 times per week.

"Our internal management system really allows us to view the entire cemetery digitally," Miller says. "Of course, getting out in the field is required to do the work. But from a planning perspective, you can see all the grave sites. All of the burial records are linked, so when I want to search a grave site, I can immediately see who's in that grave site and the type of container they were buried in, and also the depth they were buried at."

THE ANC EXPLORER APP

Arlington National Cemetery's ANC Explorer app allows anyone with a smartphone or electronic tablet to visit and learn about America's most famous resting place whenever they want, from wherever they are.

"This app is so well developed," one user commented on Google Play. "There were so many problems at Arlington, but this really shows the progress that has been made."

Another user wrote, "Found my dad, grandfather and my grandma. Nice to check out when I'm thinking of them. And when I visit, I can easily get to them." A third reviewer suggested that similar apps should be developed for other cemeteries worldwide.

Launched for public use Oct. 22, ANC Explorer uses technology developed by the Army for its own geographic information system: the Army Mapper, an interactive mapping tool that supports management of Army installations worldwide.

ANC Explorer's first version can be downloaded free of charge via Apple's App Store or Google Play. It takes 11.4 MB of space and is compatible with iPhone, iPad, iPod Touch and Android phones. The current app includes a grave site locator, digital photos of headstones, and detailed walking and driving directions. A future version will include shuttle stops, self-guided tours and event notifications.

"ANC Explorer is another milestone in our transformation," says Kathryn Condon, the cemetery's executive director. "There isn't a national cemetery that is as technologically advanced as Arlington, both in day-to-day operations and how it connects to its families and visitors."

Grave sites can be found by typing in a name, date of birth or date of death. The app can be used to plan visits to the cemetery and to guide users on the grounds. They can locate monuments, memorials and notable grave sites. Anyone with a smartphone can map a route from where they are standing.

Army Maj. Nick Miller, ANC's chief information officer, says the app also simplifies grave research. "Three years ago, people had to search through more than 400,000 paper records to get any information. You can now do that with a simple search that a computer can return to you instantaneously.

"This is just the beginning, and we really look forward to feedback from the public," Miller says. "Over time, we're going to continue to add features and capabilities that will improve this product."

Such precise mapping gives cemetery workers greater confidence in what they're doing, he adds. "Before they put that backhoe in the ground, they know what to expect, and they're prepared – to make sure that when they do bury this veteran, that it's done professionally."

Condon says that making such changes in two years would have been impossible without Army technology. "We didn't have to go out and put things on contract. We have turned a corner. We have proven that, by leveraging the Army's technology, we fixed it."

The Army Geospatial Center developed ANC's digital mapping capabilities with a special program that ensures accuracy; it could serve as a model to support operations at 170 national cemeteries managed in the United States and abroad by the departments of the Army, the Interior and Veterans Affairs.

RESTORING TRUST. Another innovation at the cemetery is the online headstone and niche cover designer tool, which allows families to make their inscription decisions before the funeral and prevent misspelled names and other clerical errors.

"Just before the burial is not the moment you want to decide what to put on your loved one's headstone," Condon says. "Families have time to think about it, to discuss what they want to do ahead of time, and then we just verify the information on the day their loved one is buried."

The bottom line for Hallinan and Condon is that trust is restored.

"When I attend a full military funeral and see the respect and honor shown, all these issues pale in their significance," Hallinan says. "Arlington is in good hands, it has good leadership, and it has people who deeply care about the mission here. And that resonates with the workforce. Going forward, the American people can be confident in Arlington."

Sometimes, after Condon has testified at a congressional hearing, she'll walk among the rows of headstones "just to make sure I never lose sight of why I'm here. And I would like to give a shout-out to the veterans service organizations, including The American Legion, for putting those issues on the front page. When there are problems, they need to be fixed. This has enabled us to focus on what truly needs to be restored here: the faith of the American public that we've got it right."

Philip M. Callaghan is media marketing director for The American Legion.

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Air Force ROTC cadet Andrew Hendricks adjusts his garrison cap at Yale University in New Haven, Conn. In 2011, Yale, Harvard and Columbia all signed agreements to restart ROTC units on campus. AP/Jessica Hill

THE RETURN OF ROTC

Ivy League campuses welcome back military units after a decades-long hiatus.

BY DOUG WISSING

The Reserve Officers' Training Corps (ROTC) has a proud legacy within the U.S. military and on college campuses, where hundreds of thousands of cadets have trained since the program began in 1916.

Today, 70,000 ROTC cadets train on 300 host campuses and at several hundred cross-enrolled schools with ROTC programs. Nearly 40 percent of all officers commissioned passed through ROTC programs. But the story of ROTC on college campuses has many chapters – some triumphant, some tumultuous.

The latest was opened May 26, 2011, when Secretary of the Navy Ray Mabus joined Yale President Richard Levin to re-establish a host Navy ROTC (NROTC) unit at the university after a 40-year hiatus that began in the turbulent Vietnam War era. In many ways, the Yale ceremony symbolized ROTC's enduring value to America.

Mabus praised Yale's alumni, who gallantly served in every U.S. war. He recalled that Yale formed a Navy air corps in 1917, the first university to do so, and in 1926 was one of the first six to establish a Navy ROTC unit.

"Navy blue and Yale blue have always been close together," he told the crowd.

Mabus also spoke of ROTC's value on campus, pointing out that when only 1 percent of Americans wear the uniform, "interaction with officer candidates in NROTC may be the only window into military life that many people at Yale will ever get."

Further, ROTC is important to the country, he said. "To best serve our nation, the military has to be reflective of the nation it serves, and it does not serve our country well if any part of the society does not share in the honor of its defense."

Military instruction on college campuses goes back to the American Revolution. When Yale students heard about the battles of Lexington and Concord in 1775, a company of student volunteers began drilling on the Connecticut campus. Yale student-soldiers were among the first to engage British troops when they landed in nearby West Haven on July 4, 1779.

In 1818, a former West Point superintendent, Capt. Alden Partridge, established the American Literary, Scientific, and Military Academy in Norwich, Vt. – known today as Norwich University – which formalized the idea of military instruction on civilian campuses. The concept spread to other institutions, including Virginia Military Institute and The Citadel. Founder Thomas Jefferson required that all University of Virginia students have military instruction, and by 1840 Indiana University and the University of Tennessee added compulsory military training.

The concept expanded dramatically when President Abraham Lincoln signed the Morrill Act in 1862. Championed by Vermont legislator Justin Morrill, the act granted each state 30,000 acres of public land to establish institutions of scientific learning, with the provision that these land-grant colleges include military tactics courses in their curricula. By the end of the 19th century, 105 colleges and universities across the country offered military training.

In 1914, an influential group of pro-British American leaders were convinced that the United States would eventually enter the world war and formed the Preparedness Movement. They

lobbied for a national service program to train 18-year-old men in military tactics before assigning them to reserve units. Preparedness supporter and former President Theodore Roosevelt decried the "professional pacifists, poltroons and college sissies" who argued against the program.

The Plattsburg Movement, a volunteer nonenlistment training program organized by private citizens in Plattsburgh, N.Y., grew out of the Preparedness Movement. During the summers of 1915 and 1916, the Plattsburg Movement trained 20,000 professors, artists, lawyers, doctors, bankers, businessmen, clerks, diplomats, farmers and policemen to be potential Army officers – part of the 40,000 college alumni who eventually learned to march and shoot at Preparedness camps.

Harvard University graduate Gen. Leonard Wood was a leading proponent of the Preparedness Movement. After an illustrious career fighting Geronimo's band and helping organize the Rough Riders in Cuba, Wood became Army chief of staff in 1910. In speech after speech, Wood insisted that failure to prepare for war was "brutal ... cowardly ... sinister." During his service as chief of staff, Wood implemented several programs, including proto-ROTC units at civilian colleges. Students and administrators at private and land-grant colleges alike clamored for officer training, with students at East Coast schools that included Harvard, Yale, Princeton and Dartmouth College successfully petitioning for military units.

The National Defense Act of 1916 codified many of the Preparedness Movement's ideas, merging the National Guard, Army Reserve and regular Army into the Army of the United States. Officers came from colleges and universities, where they received military training under the aegis of a new institution: ROTC.

The system quickly took root, beginning in the Ivy League, a hotbed of the Preparedness Movement. Yale's ROTC program began in the fall of 1916 with a field artillery unit. When the United States did enter World War I, there were already 90,000 ROTC-trained officers in the reserve pool, with many seeing active duty in 1917 and 1918. By the end of 1919, more than 130 institutions had ROTC units. More than 57,000 students were in Army ROTC (AROTC) programs in 1922.

In 1926, the beginning of NROTC programs at Harvard, Yale, Northwestern, Georgia Tech, Washington and California expanded the pool of officer candidates. But in the small-army isolationist period between the wars, most active-duty commissions went to service academy graduates. Even future Air Force Chief of Staff Curtis LeMay couldn't get an active-duty commission when he completed ROTC training at Ohio State in 1928, because there weren't any vacancies. However, ROTC continued to produce the majority of reserve officers during those years – 80 percent in 1940, for instance, when 220 colleges and universities had programs.

Within six months of World War II breaking out, more than 56,000 AROTC officers reported for active duty, and more than 100,000 ROTC officers had served by the war's end. ROTC-trained officers made a crucial difference in the early days of the war, when the U.S. military struggled with rapid mobilization. Gen. George Marshall wrote, "Just what we would have done in the first phases of our mobilization without (ROTC graduates) I do not know ... the cessation of hostilities on the European front would have been curtailed accordingly."

In 1945, as strategists parsed the need for increased numbers of well-educated U.S. military officers to handle global Cold War challenges, Congress passed the ROTC

NOTABLE ROTC ALUMNI

"Without ROTC, I wouldn't have had a military career. ROTC gave me my start in life, really. It's done that for thousands."

Gen. Colin Powell, former chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and U.S. secretary of state. Powell is a 1958 graduate of the City College of New York's ROTC program, at the time the nation's second largest unit.

Vitalization Act, which institutionalized campus ROTC units. By 1955, there were programs on 313 campuses in all 50 states, the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico. Welcomed by administrators, faculty and students who valued ROTC's instruction of civic duty, discipline and morality, the units were at public and private universities and colleges, including all of the Ivy League, Georgetown, Johns Hopkins and Stanford.

During the Korean War, the percentage of graduating cadets assigned to active duty skyrocketed. Through the 1950s, about 80 percent of graduating ROTC cadets became active-duty officers. But in the 1960s, the military and university communities began to count the costs, particularly of compulsory ROTC training still prevalent at land-grant universities.

The military saw soaring costs for a proportionally small harvest of career military officers – 20 students for every officer produced, according to one Air Force study. Burdened with increasingly demanding curricula, college administrators and students began to chafe at compulsory military training. Between 1961 and 1965, 60 Army and 59 Air Force ROTC units switched from compulsory to voluntary. As anticipated, rosters plummeted. But when the officer shortfall was greater than expected, the military called for changes in ROTC.

In 1964, Congress passed an updated ROTC Vitalization Act to prepare the program to be the primary source of active-duty officers: a projected 75 percent of Army officers and 50 percent of Air Force officers. To address academic and military concerns, the ROTC curricula was revamped to be more in line with university education, a scholarship program was instituted, stipends were increased and the potential pool of cadets was broadened. As it turned out, the bill's most controversial debate related to campus drill, the anathema of many a harassed college student and the keystone of military training to many a veteran officer. Drill stayed.

When opposition to the Vietnam War flared on campuses in 1968, ROTC faced a new challenge. For the first time, university communities viewed ROTC units as outliers rather than the prestigious campus organizations they had been seen as since 1916. Between the congressional mandate to remain visible on campus, and the military requirement to maintain distance from antiwar protests, the ROTC officers were in a tough spot during the late 1960s. One Michigan State military science professor claimed it was like being in "an embassy on foreign soil."

ROTC enrollment dropped 25 percent from 1968 to 1969, when the draft lottery further hit ROTC. But even during that 1960s nadir, most university students were in favor of military training on campus – more than 75 percent at many schools. The bigger challenge came from university faculty councils demanding that ROTC courses adhere to the same academic criteria as the rest of the university or lose college credit. That issue changed the role of ROTC on U.S. campuses far more than anti-military students. Faced with ROTC's demotion to an extracurricular activity, the military began to close units in the Northeast, particularly at the Ivy League schools that had graduated tens of thousands of officers.

As the United States instituted a zero-draft military in 1973, ROTC continued to provide high-quality officers trained in a relatively economical university setting. In 1969, it cost on average $4,320 to produce an ROTC officer, compared to $8,320 in officer candidate school and $47,136 in the service academies. Universities were also prepared to provide officers with the cultural training needed for the

Kirk Douglas
Actor
Notre Dame ROTC, 1944

Samuel Alito
Supreme Court justice
Princeton ROTC, 1976

Gen. Carl E. Mundy Jr.
Marine Corps commandant
Auburn University NROTC, 1957

"hearts-and-minds" work that asymmetrical wars like Vietnam demanded.

With ROTC enrollments dropping overall through the 1970s, the military focused on the less expensive and more welcoming campuses of the South and the West, where senior officers thought the service branches could get more officer bang for the buck. ROTC expert Cheryl Miller, who heads the Program on American Citizenship at the American Enterprise Institute, says of high-cost Northeastern institutions, "The military doesn't think about them as elite schools. They think of them as expensive schools."

Through the 1970s and 1980s, the numbers of female and black ROTC cadets increased rapidly, producing a more diverse officer corps. And in 1993, Congress passed the law commonly referred to as "don't ask, don't tell" (DADT), which allowed lesbians, gays and bisexuals to serve in the military so long as they did not reveal their sexual orientation. The bill also prohibited discrimination against closeted servicemembers or applicants.

From the law's signing on Dec. 21, 1993, until its repeal on Sept. 20, 2011, DADT complicated ROTC, particularly in the Northeast, where universities cited the discrimination issue as justification for not hosting ROTC units.

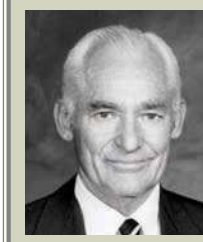
"Harvard's left-wing fringe just went up into orbit over 'don't ask, don't tell,'" says retired Navy Capt. Paul E. Mawn, chairman of Advocates for Harvard ROTC. But the Solomon Amendment, which prohibited universities from banning ROTC or risk losing federal funding, tempered the anti-ROTC movement. In most cases, ROTC never completely left campuses; student cadets could join units at neighboring schools. For example, Harvard students went to the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) for training, and Yale students to the University of Connecticut.

Nonetheless, for decades after the Vietnam War, there was scarce support for ROTC in the top universities, where military service had been a tradition. Former President George H.W. Bush, a Yale graduate, attributed the transition to "cultural arrogance." In 1956, 400 out of 750 Princeton graduates went into the service. By 2004, only nine Princeton graduates entered the military – and Princeton led the Ivy League. Stanford had 1,100 cadets in ROTC in 1956. In 2006, there were 29. The military was "just not on the radar of most undergraduates," Mawn says.

When Yale ROTC graduate Flagg Youngblood went to the university in the 1990s, he was told to not wear his uniform to class. "The antiwar animus was still pretty strong on campus," he says, adding that that sentiment changed after 9/11.

In 2010, Secretary of Defense Robert Gates spoke about the volunteer armed services and called for change: "This tiny sliver of America has achieved extraordinary things in the most trying circumstances. It is the most professional, the best educated, the most capable force this country has ever sent into battle." Challenging ROTC to broaden its base, he warned of the risk of developing a cadre of military leaders that politically, culturally and geographically have less and less in common with the people they have sworn to defend.

The next year, when President Barack Obama announced the repeal of the ban on gays serving openly in the military, he said, "I call on all of our college campuses to open their doors to our military recruiters and the ROTC. It is time to leave behind the divisive battles of the past. It is time to move forward as one nation." But times had already changed. The Ivy League was eager to welcome ROTC host units back, as the presidents of Harvard, Yale and Columbia had previously announced the restarts of their programs. The NROTC program announced for Rutgers University is the first in New Jersey since 1972.



Sam Walton
Founder of Walmart
University of Missouri ROTC, 1940

James Earl Jones
Actor
University of Michigan ROTC, 1955

Alan Bean
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Students and ROTC midshipmen Evan Roth, left, Colin Dickinson and Catherine Philbin walk past Dunster House on the campus of Harvard University in Cambridge, Mass. ROTC programs are coming back to some Ivy League universities four decades after Vietnam War protesters cheered their departure. AP photo

ROTC officially returned to Yale last fall. Annapolis graduate and helicopter pilot Lt. Molly Crabbe is the first NROTC officer assigned there in 40 years. "We have boots on the ground at Yale," she says.

To get things started, she's been commuting about 100 miles from her College of the Holy Cross office.

"I put on my Yale hat and go down there and try to get the program going," she says. "The reception at Yale has been spectacular."

Marine Capt. Chris Reinke serves with Crabbe at Yale, and echoes her assessment: "I walk around Yale in my Charlies and people say, 'Thanks for being here,'" he says.

Yale student James Campbell is one of those who appreciates it. He's already participating in an ROTC unit. "I'll be happy to have more company," he says with a laugh. A typical over-committed Yale student, Campbell says ROTC provides something that was missing in his college experience – and that he'll somehow fit it into his schedule. "There's not much going on at Yale at 5 a.m.," he says.

The opening of new ROTC units is paradoxically coming at a time of declining military budgets and reduced officer needs. Cadet recruitment is dropping. "Nationally, the numbers are going down – rapidly," says Reinke, citing the recession and the DoD budget. Indiana University AFROTC Commander Lt. Col. Jason Turner speaks of the Air Force chief of staff's warning of "fiscal austerity."

"With less resources, you buy fewer shiny toys and things that go boom, and you have less officers – 'force strength,' we call it," Turner says. He's seeing a healthy interest in ROTC, but the reduced numbers of officers are sobering for students. "Cadets are more realistic ... Their options in the military are narrowing."

Through thick and thin, history has proven ROTC to be an essential element in the nation's defense – and contemporary needs guarantee its future. The program is crucial for the military.

"It's a source of officers, first," says retired Gen. Colin Powell, the first ROTC graduate to be named chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. "It leavens the force – you get young people from all over the country. Without ROTC, I don't know how we'd do it."

ROTC also brings military personnel and ideals to sometimes insular universities. As Youngblood says, "It's a visible reminder that academics need military willing to serve at the forward edge of freedom."

Finally, ROTC continues to imbue generations of citizen-soldiers with the cultural and technical education vital for America's global defense. Both the military and the academy benefit from the understanding and communication that only comes from proximity.

As Gates has said, "If America's best and brightest young people will not step forward, who then can we count on to protect and sustain the greatness of this country in the 21st century?"

Doug Wissing has written for National Geographic Traveler, ForbesLife *and* Gray's Sporting Journal. *He is a frequent contributor to* The American Legion Magazine.

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Limey, Trix and the Greek

Cliff Guard and his soldier buddies survived World War II by depending on one another.

BY MATT GRILLS

Every soldier has a band of brothers, and in the twilight of his life, Cliff Guard is holding fast to memories of his.

Nearly 70 years ago, Guard arrived in New York and enlisted in the U.S. Army, a Welshman eager to fight for "the greatest country in the world." Assigned to the 23rd Armored Engineers, 3rd Armored Division, he met Ralph "Trixie" Trinkley and Henry "The Greek" Kallas. Together, the three men landed on Omaha Beach shortly after D-Day, pushed across France, Belgium and into Germany, and participated in some of World War II's bloodiest engagements, including the Battle of the Bulge.

They looked out for one another. They talked intimately about their families, their girlfriends and their dreams. Then, when the enemy had been defeated and they went their own ways, they promised to meet again someday.

"You couldn't have been any closer than me and Trix and the Greek," Guard says. "We saw the war through together."

Sailor to Soldier. Desperate for work, Guard left his home in Swansea, Wales, at 15 to join the British Merchant Navy. He was in Montreal when war broke out and was soon crossing the Atlantic in convoys, ferrying food, medicine and other supplies to Great Britain. On one of those trips, he learned that the Luftwaffe had blitzed his town, killing 230 people and leaving more than 7,000 without homes.

Tired of being a deck boy, Guard left his ship in Fremantle, Australia, hoping to find passage to Sydney. "I wanted to join the Royal Australian Air Force as a radio operator," he says. But the vessel he boarded, a Dutch ship called *Slaughterdyke*, wasn't headed that way. "We got out to sea, and I said to this guy I was working with, 'When are we getting into Sydney?' He said, 'We're going to Cape Town, South Africa.' I said, 'You're kidding.'"

Cliff Guard is a 62-year member of The American Legion. He and buddy Ralph "Trixie" Trinkley belong to Glenn Campbell, Pa., Post 435. Nick Tremmel/*Muskegon Chronicle*

Eventually, Guard arrived in Staten Island, N.Y., where he did odd jobs for a doctor who headed the local draft board. Asked what he wanted to do with his life, Guard said he wouldn't mind getting into the Yankee Navy. "The following day, he came back and said, 'I can't get you into the Navy, but I can get you into the Army.' I told him, 'I'll make you a good soldier.'"

That was February 1943. Guard reported to Camp Upton, N.Y., for induction, then boarded a train for Fort Leonard Wood, Mo. "When I put on that uniform, I was the proudest man on God's earth. It felt so right. I was an American."

Still, "Limey" protested when officers tried to put him in the kitchen. "I said, 'No, I came over here to do some fighting. I want to get back at the people who bombed the hell out of my town and killed a lot of my friends.'"

Guard joined the 23rd Armored Engineers at Indiantown Gap, Pa., and by September was headed back across the pond – this time, aboard the *John Ericsson* with other 3rd Armored Division troops. Seeing the ship full, and soldiers sharing bunks in eight-hour shifts, he asked the cook if he and a buddy could help in the galley.

"We slept down where they kept the potatoes and rice and canned goods," he recalls. "By God, we ate good."

During pre-invasion training at Salisbury Plain, Guard fell in with the two men who would become his best friends. Trinkley hailed from Pennsylvania coal country, and Kallas came from Evart, Mich. They went to dances together, played poker together, drank beers together. After a while, they became inseparable.

"If any of us was short on money, we shared what we had," Guard says. "You just buddied up."

By the time they went ashore at Normandy in the early hours of June 23, 1944, the three had vowed to have one another's backs, whatever may come.

A Job to Do. As part of the "Spearhead" Division, they charged across Europe, tearing through hedgerows, lifting land mines, and building bridges for advancing Allied troops and tanks. They lost friends along the way, and had a few close calls themselves.

During one battle, Limey, Trix and the Greek were holed up in a barn, and mortar fire was intense. Running outside to grab more ammunition, Guard was hit in the face by splinter shrapnel, momentarily stunned. "I was bleeding, and Trix hollered, 'What the hell's wrong?'" he recalls. "I said, 'I'm alright,' and got our ammo. I felt safe when I saw them."

Another time, Guard diffused a land mine only to learn that the detonator pin had been set incorrectly. After he pulled it out, it flashed in his face as he backed away. "I thought I'd never see again," Guard says. He spent weeks recovering at a hospital in southern France, and his eyes have been weak ever since.

He brushes off any talk of heroics. "We had a job to do, and we did it," he says. "The real heroes are the boys who fell."

At war's end, Trinkley and Kallas headed home. Lacking enough points for a furlough, Guard stayed behind in Germany with the occupation forces.

When he finally returned to Staten Island, Limey received his long-awaited U.S. citizenship papers and joined The American Legion. A post commander set him up with a job at a golf course, and for three and a half years, he took night classes to

Above: *Guard mans his half-track tank in 1944.*
Right: *On Remembrance Sunday, Nov. 11, Guard carried a poppy wreath to the Cenotaph at Whitehall, London, on behalf of Americans killed at Omaha Beach and across Europe in World War II.* Getty Images

get a high school diploma. Then Guard was off to Purdue University, where he used the GI Bill to earn a degree in clinical psychology.

He kept up with Trix and the Greek into the '50s, but as each started a family and changed addresses, the trio found it difficult to stay in touch. Guard, as always, was all over the map, working in Indiana, Virginia, Washington, D.C., and Saudi Arabia. When he retired, he moved back to Wales.

Friends for Life. Guard, 89, has become a representative of his quickly fading generation. Known in Swansea as the "American GI," he recently dedicated a memorial honoring the thousands of U.S. troops who lived and trained there in the months leading up to D-Day. On Remembrance Sunday in November, he took a wreath to the Cenotaph in Whitehall, London, to be placed in the memory of Americans killed in the European campaigns.

At every ceremony, every poppy appeal, Guard wears his American Legion cap, prompting others to ask how he ended up in the U.S. Army. He tells them the story, and about how the Army gave him the two best friends he ever had.

Over a decade ago, with the help of his family, Guard found Trinkley, who lives in Clymer, Pa., surrounded by pictures of Limey, Trix and the Greek. He is now 93. Before Trinkley lost his hearing, he spoke with Guard frequently, grinning whenever he heard that his battle buddy was on the phone.

On one occasion, Guard surprised Trinkley with a visit. Looking up from a newspaper, seeing Guard walk toward him, Trinkley exclaimed, "Limey! How are you?" They talked awhile, laughing and reminiscing.

"He said to me, 'Limey, where's that money you owe me?'" Guard couldn't remember. "He said, 'You know, up in Aachen, they gave you a three-day pass, and you went to Paris. I lent you about a hundred francs.' I said, 'Oh, that? It's in the mail. Coming from France, it takes a long time.'"

The two men broke into laughter.

With one friend located, Guard knew he had to track down the Greek. His only clue was an old address in Reed City, Mich., until he crossed paths with an American couple vacationing in Wales in October 2010. They lived in Michigan and offered to look up Kallas.

Months of searching unearthed just one name: an S. Kallas in the Muskegon-North Ottawa phone book. Henry Kallas had died in 1997, but his widow, Shirley, knew all about Limey and Trix.

Already planning a trip to the United States, Guard asked if he could see her. When that emotional moment finally came, Shirley reached up and touched his face, saying, "To think I've met Limey, finally."

They compared photographs and shared tales, and Shirley introduced Guard to the Greek's 17-year-old grandson, James.

"I want you to know that your granddad was a outstanding soldier," he told him. "You could always count on him when things got rough. He was a friend for life, that's what."

As long as he's able, Guard will tell of the exploits of Limey, Trix and the Greek. Such bands of brothers won World War II, and in return, they ask only that those who follow keep their stories alive.

Matt Grills is managing editor of The American Legion Magazine.

The invention of the year is great news for your ears

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New Personal Sound Amplification Product is an affordable alternative

Over the years, technology has made the way we live easier, safer and more convenient. In many cases, it's even made many products more affordable… (remember how much the first VCR used to cost?). Unfortunately, the cost of hearing aids never seemed to come down. Now, a new alternative has been invented… it's called Perfect Choice HD™.

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Perfect Choice HD is NOT a hearing aid. Hearing aids can only be sold by an audiologist or a licensed hearing instrument specialist. In order to get a hearing aid, you had to go to the doctor's office for a battery of tests and numerous fitting appointments. Once they had you tested and fitted, you would have to pay as much as $5000 for the product. Now, thanks to the efforts of the doctor who leads a renowned hearing institute, there is Perfect Choice HD. It's designed to accurately amplify sounds and deliver them to your ear. Because we've developed an efficient production process, we can make a great product at an affordable price. The unit has been designed to have an easily accessible battery, but it is small and lightweight enough to hide behind your ear… only you'll know you have it on. It's comfortable and won't make you feel like you have something stuck in your ear. It provides high quality audio so sounds and conversations will be easier to hear and understand.

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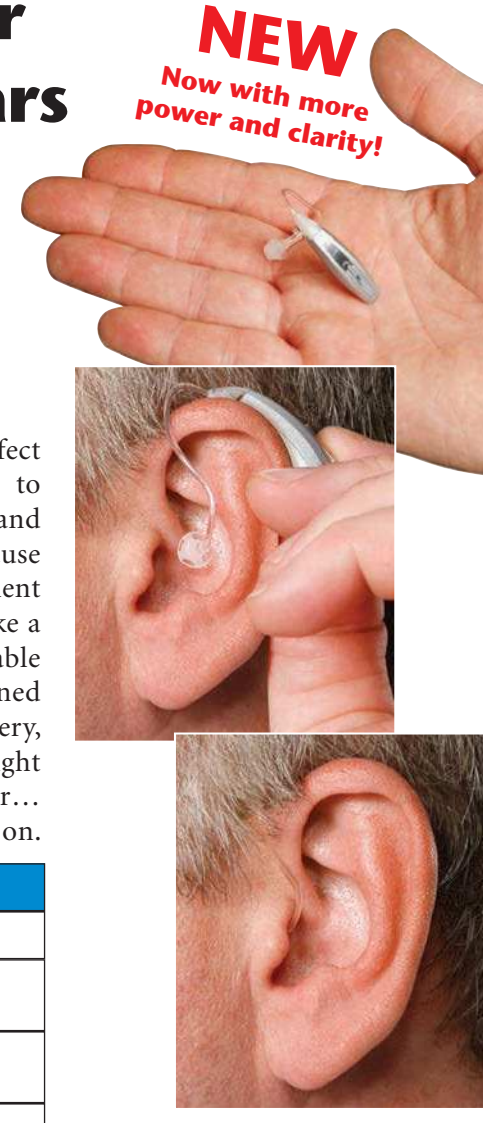

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LEGIONNAIRES IN ACTION

SANDY'S SAVIORS

Legion posts offered shelter, meals and other aid in superstorm's wake.

From the moment Sandy subsided in early November, American Legion posts up and down the East Coast had boots on the ground, helping lead relief efforts.

Thousands of homes and businesses were still without power and shoreline cities were underwater as Legionnaires began collecting donations for displaced families. They opened their posts as storm shelters, coordinated disaster relief with authorities and provided the "high touch" aid so important in emergencies.

"Legionnaires from all over the country have been calling me, wanting to help," said Jim Casey, past department commander of New York, just days after the storm hit. "The first thing I do when I go to see people (in the affected areas) is tell them that everyone is pulling for us – people from Buffalo, upstate, all over."

While delivering canned goods and winter clothes to those in need, Casey helped spread the word about immediate assistance available through the Legion's National Emergency Fund (NEF). Legionnaires and Sons of The American Legion members can apply for grants up to $1,500 that cover housing costs, food and clothing. Posts can apply for grants up to $5,000.

Tinamarie Vega, a volunteer from Bronx, N.Y., sorts donated goods at Broad Channel Post 1404. Photo by Amy C. Elliott

Sons of The American Legion members from Pennsylvania's 9th District helped Sandy victims reach safety following the superstorm. Photo provided by John Cramsey

Members of Broad Channel Post 1404 in Queens County, N.Y., distributed Meals Ready-to-Eat (MREs) and water to residents of the borough, which bore the brunt of the storm. The post – located in the decimated Broad Channel neighborhood of Queens – regained electricity and served as a distribution point for donated goods. "When we'd bring in supplies down there, I'd tell the people there, 'Don't worry. No one's forgotten about you,'" said David Valentin, Queens County commander.

Babylon Village, N.Y., Post 94 converted its building into a "warming center" for people on Long Island's south shore, the front line of Superstorm Sandy. Members served meals all day – bagels in the morning, hot soup and sandwiches in the afternoon, and barbecue in the evening. They also helped clear debris from homes, deliver canned goods to the shorefront, and distribute blankets, coats, towels, cleaning supplies, toilet paper and other necessary items. "These are our neighbors," said Armen Enkababian, Post 94 commander. "We believe it's important as a community to take care of your own."

Post 296 in Queenstown, Md., and the post's Auxiliary unit came to the rescue of a military family whose house burned down in a fire caused by the storm. The post donated $2,000, and the Auxiliary unit $1,000, to help replace belongings. The family didn't have renters insurance, and the husband is stationed out of state. "We wanted to do whatever we could to get their feet back on the ground," said Sam Reeder, Post 296 commander.

Read more stories about Legionnaires' relief efforts following Superstorm Sandy:

www.legion.org/magazine

NEF NATIONAL EMERGENCY FUND

TO DONATE

Superstorm Sandy caused an estimated $50 billion in economic loss and damages. Help Legionnaires and SAL members affected by this and other disasters by donating to the National Emergency Fund.

www.legion.org/emergency/help

(800) 433-3318

ASK A SERVICE OFFICER

VA pension no mystery

Cajun Comeau
Department Service Officer, North Carolina

Q: *Can you offer some VA pension facts, farces and pitfalls?*

A: Let's start with the facts. VA pension is a needs-based benefit for veterans and eligible dependents. To gain entitlement, you must be a veteran discharged under other-than-dishonorable conditions, have wartime service (defined as a period of war as set forth by the U.S. government and VA), be 65 or permanently disabled, and meet VA income requirements. Survivors of veterans who meet eligibility requirements may also be eligible for a survivor's pension. Seek assistance and counseling regarding eligibility and proper filing methods from an accredited veterans service officer.

The farce. Don't believe the lie that a VA pension is a "hidden government benefit" for which you need an attorney or financial planner to unlock the mystery. Do not fall victim to a scam designed to take your money and deprive you of the professional assistance you and your dependents have earned through service to our country. An accredited service officer can advise you on your entitlement. He or she can also walk you through the process of filing, following up, reviewing and challenging on legal grounds.

The pitfalls. Due to the recession, more veterans and survivors are seeking assistance through the VA pension program. Many entities have surfaced that try to convince those entitled to pensions that they will receive more professional and competent help by retaining the services of a "pension specialist" or attorney. Simply put, if anyone proposes that he or his organization should be paid for providing veterans with services, he should not be trusted or utilized. Veterans have earned free assistance, and The American Legion – with our extensive veterans service officer network – stands ready to provide competent, professional service free of charge to all eligible persons. Visit **www.legion.org/serviceofficers** to find an accredited service officer in your area.

Do you have a question for Department of North Carolina Service Officer Cajun Comeau about the claims process or veterans benefits in general? Send it to ***askso@legion.org****.*

RELIGION

Got God?

6 Percent of Americans are self-described atheists or agnostics

20 Percent of Americans claim no religious affiliation

33 Percent of American adults younger than 30 are religiously unaffiliated

Source: Pew Forum on Religion & Public Life

LEGIONNAIRES IN ACTION

$800,000 donation benefits homeless vets

Photo by Carl Brown

A 92-year-old World War II veteran has donated $800,000 to help shelter homeless veterans in Jewett City, Conn.

Michael Guty's gift is his way of assisting those who have served. It also fulfills a longtime promise to his friend, Bill Czmyr, a Legionnaire who started the homeless shelter.

The gift, which was revealed in October, goes to La-Flamme Kusek Post 15 in Jewett City. The post maintains American Legion Veterans Housing, Inc., which oversees the program's rent-free apartments in the upstairs part of the post building.

"He offered to give the money a while back," Czmyr said. "He never told me how much and I never asked. I just told him it would be appreciated."

15.2 Percent of homeless Americans who are veterans. Veterans make up less than 9 percent of the population nationally.

21.3 Percent of homeless veterans older than 60, compared to 9.4 percent of homeless nonveterans

5.8 The average number of years veterans remain homeless. For nonveterans, the average is 3.92 years.

Source: National Center on Homelessness Among Veterans

VERBATIM

"**Everything's gone – come look, please! I lost everything, my livelihood! We need so much help.**"

Angela Fugel, showing Sen. Chuck Schumer, D-N.Y., the ruins of her family's Staten Island business, A&J Police Equipment and Uniforms, after Superstorm Sandy slammed the East Coast

VEER

PERSONAL FINANCE

Make your own financial luck in '13

We have to admit that this year has us feeling a bit uneasy. It's the first time we've seen "13" at the top of the calendar, so the odds could be stacked against us. Even so, we're big believers in creating your own luck, so we're going to offer four steps to help do just that:

FOCUS ON FINANCES

WITH JUNE WALBERT & J.J. MONTANARO

■ **Consolidate and simplify.** "Don't put all your eggs in one basket" is typically sound financial advice. However, having so many baskets that you can't keep track of them can defeat the purpose. It's very difficult to manage and maintain your portfolio or spending when your money is strewn across multiple accounts and institutions. So come up with an investment plan and then consolidate your holdings into no more than a few baskets. Use online bill pay and automatic investments to ensure you're doing the right thing at the right time.

■ **Save now for near-term goals.** Whether it's holiday shopping, vacations or something else, you probably already know where some of your money will be spent this year. Bingo! You've just taken the first step in developing a savings plan. "Plan and save" is a much better financial strategy than "wait and borrow." Develop a monthly savings plan to accumulate the money rather than borrowing it. When you're able to do or get what you want without racking up big-time interest, it won't have anything to do with luck.

■ **Look at liability.** Bad things can happen to the best of us, and sometimes it's even our fault. If you're found legally responsible following an incident or accident at your home, on the road or on the water, you could find yourself at the wrong end of a costly lawsuit. To help protect yourself, make sure you have adequate levels of liability insurance offered through homeowners, renters, auto policies, or separately through a personal umbrella policy. Hint: In many situations, state-mandated levels of auto liability coverage could be woefully inadequate.

■ **Create an estate plan.** Wealthy or not, most Americans need some form of estate plan. Typically this includes at least a will and/or trust, a durable power of attorney, a health-care power of attorney and a living will. Preparing these documents is far from pleasant, but the pain of getting them done is usually much less than the pain your survivors will feel if you become incapacitated or pass away without them.

Is that all you've got to do? No, but it could be a good start. Thomas Jefferson said, "I'm a great believer in luck, and I find the harder I work the more I have of it." Now that's a sentiment we can all embrace.

June Lantz Walbert and J.J. Montanaro are certified financial planners for USAA, The American Legion's preferred provider of financial services. Submit questions for them online.

www.legion.org/focusonfinances

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VERBATIM

> **"If Texas becomes a swing state, it's all over."**

Alan Abramowitz, a political scientist at Emory University, who says that the increasing number of Latino voters could sink the GOP's ability to map a winning electoral strategy. Exit polls revealed that President Obama claimed more than 70 percent of Latino and Asian voters.

GET BACK IN THE WATER SAFELY: *A SAFE STEP TO COMFORT AND INDEPENDENCE*

The MOST DANGEROUS room in your home... the bathroom

According to The New York Times*, the bathroom can be the most dangerous room in the home. Hundreds of thousands of falls and accidents happen each year.

FACT: 1 in 3 adults 65+ fall each year, and falls are the leading cause of injury death as well as the most common cause of nonfatal injuries and hospital admissions for trauma.**

*BAKALAR, NICHOLAS. "Watch Your Step While Washing Up." New York Times 16, Aug. 2011, New York Edition ed., Section D sec.: D7. Web **CDC - Center for Disease Control and Prevention

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EDUCATION

Will VA pay for a retake?

Q: *I transferred 18 months of my Post-9/11 GI Bill to my daughter so she could earn a degree in respiratory therapy. However, the program was more difficult than she anticipated and she failed a course. To graduate she will need to repeat it, but she's used the 18 months transferred to her. Is it possible to transfer two additional months of benefits, and will VA pay for the repeated course?*

A: If you have remaining months of entitlement, you can transfer them to your daughter. Since she failed a class, she received a "punitive grade," which doesn't count as earned credit but is used in determining progress toward graduation requirements. This means that the grade counted – albeit negatively – so you are not required to repay any GI Bill money received for that class. She may retake the class in an attempt to receive credit toward graduation or raise her grade, and she may receive GI Bill payment for it.

Valerie Heffner, a Marine Corps veteran and member of American Legion Post 27 in Arizona, is a past vice president of the National Association of Veterans' Program Administrators. ***askvalerie@legion.org***

CAREERS

Job interviews are a two-way street

The single most important thing to know about interviewing is that two interviews should be happening simultaneously:

- The company interviews you for a job.
- You interview the company to determine if you want to work there.

The company does not have all the power and is not the sole decision maker. Many people turn down jobs because they don't offer the right environment or cultural fit. You're going to spend a huge amount of time at work, so it must be with a company you respect and with colleagues you admire. If not, you'll be looking for a new job tomorrow.

Some of you may be desperate. Perhaps you've been looking for a long time, are in a tough financial situation or have other demands. If that's your situation, take the job and do what you need to do. It's OK.

Conversely, though, if you're in a situation where you can wait to find the right job with the right company, acknowledge that you have as much power as the company does. Go into the interview with confidence and know that half of the decision is yours.

Some of my favorite interview tips include:

- **Bring questions.** Inquire about the company, the position, the culture and more. Respond to interviewers' questions with poise, clarity and substance, but demonstrate your interest by coming prepared.
- **Ask about performance requirements.** What do they expect, and what could you do to exceed those expectations? What a great message of performance that communicates.
- **Engage your interviewers.** Ask what they like best about their jobs. This can give you valuable information.
- **Ask for the job.** If the interview has gone well and you want the job, ask for it. It's so simple, yet rarely done.
- **If the interviewer is not ready to make an offer, ask what's preventing it.** Once you know the objections, you can immediately respond to and eliminate them.

Wendy Enelow is co-author of "Expert Résumés for Military-to-Civilian Transitions" and "Executive Résumé Toolkit."

VERBATIM

> **"We do not tolerate deviations from the policies that govern who we are and what we do as sailors in the United States Navy."**

Rear Adm. Garry Bonelli, deputy commander of Naval Special Warfare Command, acknowledging that seven members of Navy SEAL Team 6 were punished for divulging classified information to the maker of the video game "Medal of Honor: Warfighter"

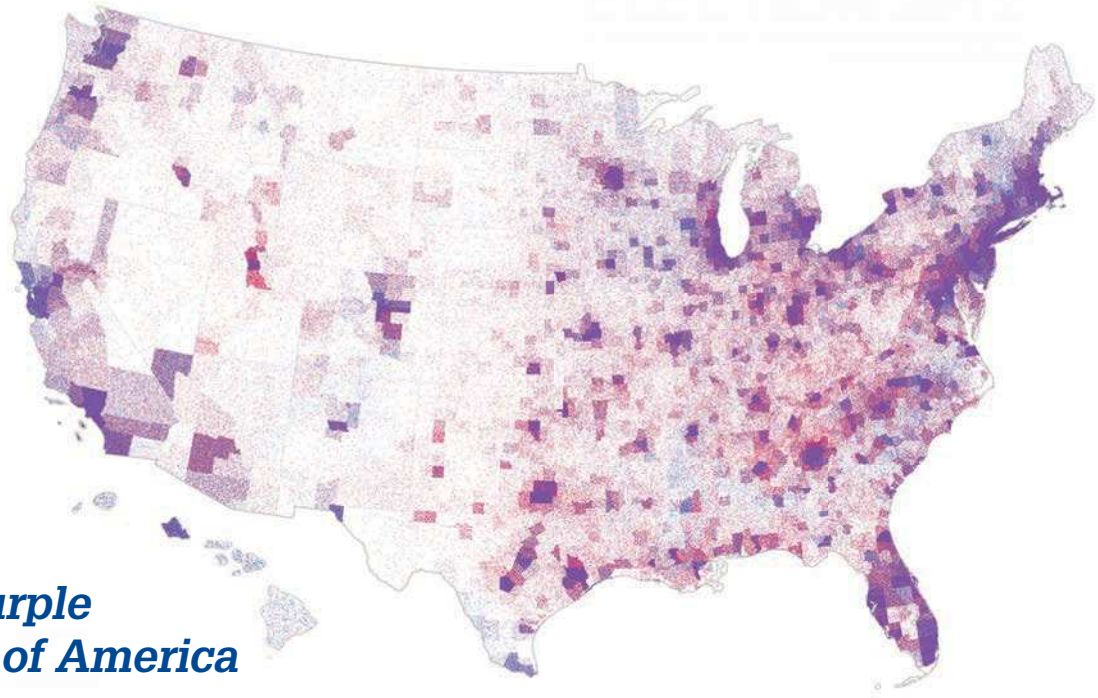
VEER

WAR ON TERROR

AQI's comeback

Al-Qaida's branch in Iraq (AQI) is rebuilding, The Associated Press reports. AQI is adding members, setting up training camps in western Iraq, controlling territory, and increasing its strength and attacks.

Before the abrupt departure of U.S. forces in December 2011, AQI had been decimated and effectively destroyed. But a year later, it numbers some 2,500 fighters and "is carrying out an average of 140 attacks each week across Iraq," AP says. Some AQI fighters are moving into Syria to conduct operations with fellow jihadist fighters involved in the multisided Syrian civil war.



POLITICS

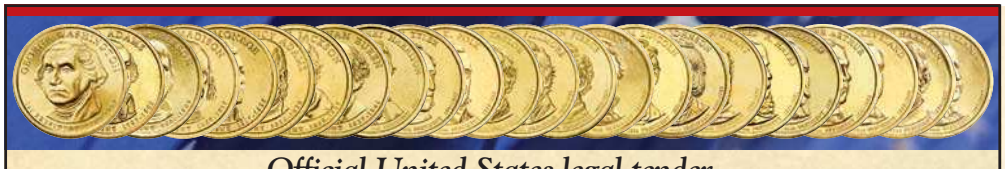
The Purple States of America

In the wake of the 2012 presidential election, data visualization expert John Nelson has redrawn the traditional red-state/blue-state map to better illustrate varying population densities and relative voting activity across the United States.

Each red dot represents 100 votes for Republican Mitt Romney, and each blue dot represents 100 votes for President Barack Obama. The resulting map is largely purple and white, with the patches of white representing lower population density in Midwestern states that are usually colored solid red on traditional political maps.

The nationwide tally, as of Nov. 21, was 62,611,250 votes for Obama and 59,134,475 for Romney, or 51 percent to 48 percent.

Sources: IDV Solutions, POLITICO, www.census.gov, *Daily Mail*



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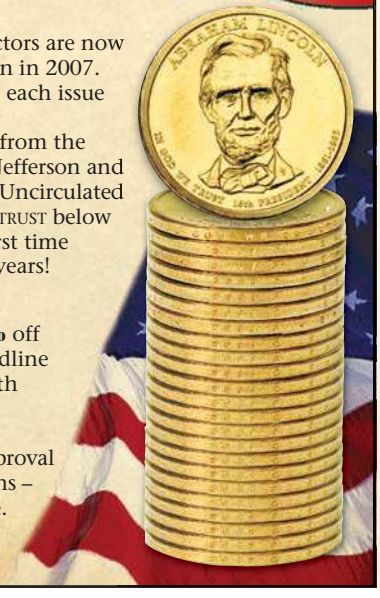

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HONOR

Legion hosts Salute to Heroes

In 1958, President Dwight Eisenhower humbly addressed a group of Medal of Honor recipients with a small request. "I should like to stand over here in the corner, and as each of you goes by, shake hands with you ... that would help me along over a lot of rough spots as they occur in my life." Five years earlier, he and first lady Mamie Eisenhower had attended the first Salute to Heroes Inaugural Ball in Washington, recognizing living recipients of the Medal of Honor. The tradition continues Jan. 21 when The American Legion plays host to the 21st Salute to Heroes, giving the commander in chief an opportunity to personally salute living recipients of the military's highest decoration, following the 57th presidential inauguration.

LEGIONNAIRES IN ACTION

Ohio Riders run for kids

The photo at left beat out dozens of others in a contest on The American Legion's Facebook page last fall, winning the most votes to be featured in *The American Legion Magazine*.

On July 21, American Legion Riders from Russell D. Williams Post 471 in Portsmouth, Ohio, presented the colors at the District 11 Southern Ohio Little League State Tournament for boys and girls with physical and mental challenges. To help raise the $25,000 needed for the Scioto County Challenger League to host the event, the Riders organized a benefit run.

"It's a great privilege and an honor to do what we can," said Mark Campbell, president of Post 471's Riders chapter. "We hope to continue the support."

From left, American Legion Riders parade the colors before a Challenger League baseball tournament. From left are Brian Lodwick with the POW flag, Randy Deathridge with the American Legion flag, Jerry Moulary with the U.S. flag, Don Step with the Ohio state flag and Mark Campbell with the American Legion Riders flag. In the center, Mike Bell calls out orders. Photo courtesy Tammy Campbell

WAR ON TERROR

The case for Gitmo

Citing reports that a former Gitmo detainee was involved in the deadly attack on the U.S. ambassador to Libya, Sen. James Inhofe, R-Okla., is calling on the executive branch to abandon all efforts to close the prison at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba.

DoD

"Sufian bin Qumu is a perfect example of why (Guantanamo) is such a valuable asset in the war on terror," Inhofe told *The Hill*. "Far too many detainees, like Qumu, have been released to other countries for continued detention simply because of political pressure."

He added, "It is a classic example of why, once a detainee is no longer under our control, they can easily return to the fight."

VERBATIM

"I get to be a fan now ... I sort of look forward to it. It's a lot more fun, actually."

George Lucas, creator of the "Star Wars" and Indiana Jones movie franchises, on his sale of Lucasfilm to The Walt Disney Co. for $4.05 billion. Disney immediately announced that a new "Star Wars" trilogy is in the works, with Episode VII set for 2015.

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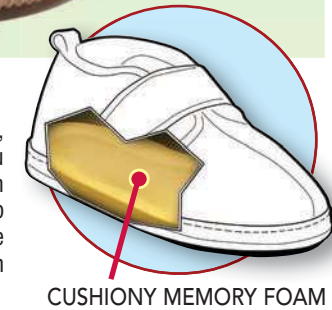

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Include the branch of service and complete name of the group, no abbreviations, with your request. The listing also should include the reunion dates and city, along with a contact name, telephone number and e-mail address. Listings are publicized free of charge.

Your notice will appear on our Web site within a week and will remain available online until the final day of your reunion. Upon submission, please allow three months for your reunion to be published in print. **Due to the large number of reunions, *The American Legion Magazine* will publish a group's listing only once a year.** Notices should be sent at least six months prior to the reunion to ensure timely publication.

Other notices

"In Search Of" is a means of getting in touch with people from your unit to plan a reunion. **We do not publish listings that seek people for interviews, research purposes, military photos or help in filing a VA claim.** Listings must include the name of the unit from which you seek people, the time period and the location, as well as a contact name, telephone number and e-mail address. Send notices to ***The American Legion Magazine,* Attn: "In Search Of," P.O. Box 1055, Indianapolis, IN 46206,** fax **(317) 630-1280** or e-mail **reunions@legion.org.**

The magazine will not publish names of individuals, only the name of the unit. Listings are published free of charge.

Life Membership notices are published for Legionnaires who have been awarded life memberships by their posts. **This does not include a member's own Paid-Up-For-Life membership.** Notices must be submitted on official forms, which may be obtained by sending a self-addressed stamped envelope to ***The American Legion Magazine,* Attn: Life Memberships, P.O. Box 1055, Indianapolis, IN 46206.**

"Comrades in Distress" listings must be approved by the Legion's Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation division. If you are seeking to verify an injury received during service, contact your Legion department service officer for information on how to publish a notice.

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ARMY

5th Bn 60th Inf, Washington, 9/11-15, William Metzler, metz560@frontier.net; **73rd Armor,** Columbus, GA, 4/23-27, Curtis Banker, (518) 643-2302, curt0742@hughes.net; **173rd Abn Bde,** Las Vegas, 8/26-29, James Bradley, (727) 376-2576, webmaster@173rdairborne.com; **508th MP Bn,** Branson, MO, 5/1-8, Don Henderson, (765) 654-5288, dhoink@sbcglobal.net; **ASA (SE Asia),** Colorado Springs, CO, 6/13-16, Jerry Frankenburger, (814) 643-6106, tvchieu@yahoo.com; **C Btry 6th Missile Bn 44th Arty,** St. Petersburg, FL, 2/13-15, Gene Darrow, (563) 322-2279, darrowmildred@yahoo.com; **Charlie Co 2nd Bn 506th Inf 101st Abn Div (Vietnam, 1970-71),** Branson, MO, 6/12-15, Mike Womack, (417) 230-8032, stands.alone506@gmail.com; **Counter Intelligence Corps Vets,** Herndon, VA, 5/9-13, Ted Critchfield, (812) 923-6972, tcritchf@wildblue.net; **MAAG (Vietnam),** St. Louis, 5/10-13, Wayne McCaughey, (301) 387-3225, wmmccaughey@verizon.net; **Vietnam Vets Line Haul Reunion,** Pigeon Forge, TN, 4/30-5/5, Wesley Taylor, (904) 335-7402, vietnam566th@yahoo.com

COAST GUARD

Alaska/Bering Sea Patrol & All CG Ships, Reno, NV, 5/19-23, Doak Walker, (907) 789-2579, allships33@gmail.com

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Irvin A. Quick, Dept. of Wyoming. Dept. Cmdr. 1985-1986, Nat'l & Homeland Security Cncl. Vice Chmn. 1990-1993 and 2008-2012, Nat'l Mil. Affairs Cmte. Memb. 1993-1997, Nat'l Merchant Marine Cmte. Memb. 2002-2004, Nat'l Exec. Cmte. Alt. Memb. 2002-2004, Nat'l Econ. Cmsn. Liaison Cmte. Memb. 2004-2005, Nat'l Exec. Cmte. Memb. 2004-2008 and Nat'l Sec. Cmsn. Liaison Cmte. Memb. 2005-2008.

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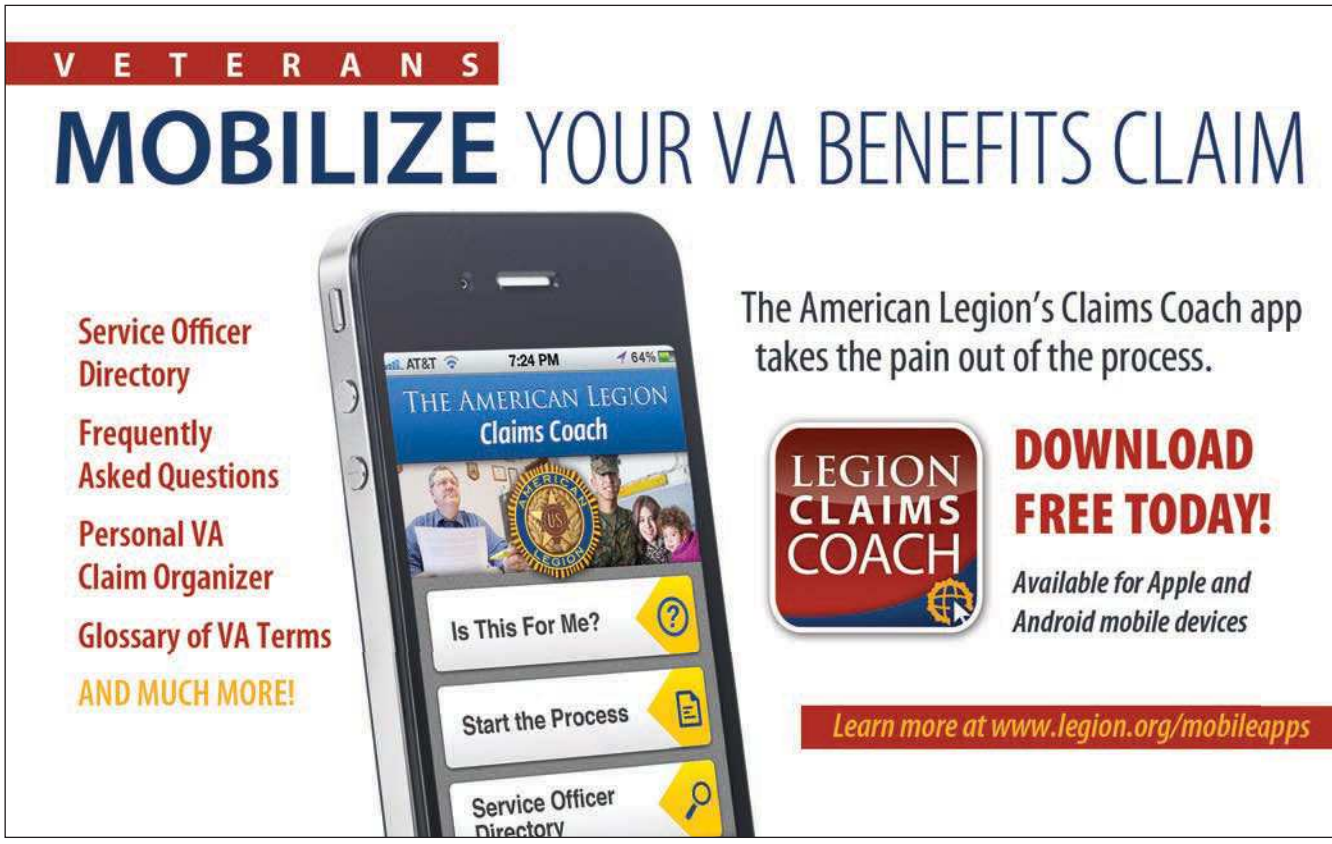
Cleave B. Weiss, Dept. of Arkansas. Dept. Cmdr. 1995-1996, Nat'l Internal Affairs Cmsn. Memb. 1998-2001, Nat'l Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation Cmsn. Memb. 2005-2009, Nat'l Exec. Cmte. Alt. Memb. 2008-2009, Nat'l Exec. Cmte. Memb. 2009-2011 and Nat'l Internal Affairs Cmsn. Liaison Cmte. Memb. 2009-2011.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My hobby is napping. It's fun and inexpensive.

A BUILDING CONTRACTOR agreed to let his nephew work for him over the summer. One day, they drove to a lumber yard. The contractor sent his nephew in to make the purchase while he waited in the truck.

Reading from his uncle's list, the young man said, "I need 200 2-by-4s, 120 1-by-8s and 240 2-by-6s."

The clerk waited a few seconds for him to continue, then asked, "How long? How long do you want them?"

The nephew thought for a few seconds before replying, confidently, "Forever. We're building a house."

AFTER A FIRST DATE, with both parties splitting the cost of dinner and a movie, the young man was rebuffed at the door by his date. "Since we've gone Dutch on everything else," she said, "you can just kiss yourself goodnight."

A SPORTSMAN who lived in the city went to a hunting lodge and bagged a record number of birds, aided by a dog named Salesman. The next year, he returned and asked for Salesman.

"That hound ain't no good now," the handler said with disgust.

"What happened?" the sportsman asked. "Was he injured?"

"No," the handler replied. "Some idiot who had him for a week was so happy with him that he started calling him Sales Manager. Now all he does is sit on his tail and bark."

"Thanks for coming into work on such short notice."

"What a rotten zoo! Just horses running around in circles!"

"... and put your cellphones on vibrate."

THE LOCAL TV STATION'S weather desk received a postcard: "I thought you would be interested to know that I just finished shoveling 3 feet of partly cloudy from my front steps."

KILL TWO BIRDS with one stone this year. Give up your New Year's resolutions for Lent.

A MAN who had spent several years working in retail joined the police force. A few months later, a friend asked him how he liked his new job.

"The pay is good and the hours are OK," he replied, "but what I really like is that the customer is always wrong."

"THERE'S BEEN some talk about making Election Day a national holiday so people have more time to vote. I think people are so sick of this election. How about making the day after Election Day the holiday?" – *Jay Leno*

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Turner W. Branch, a principal and senior partner of the Branch Law Firm, retired as a 1st Lieutenant in the United States Marine Corps in 1968. He served on active duty in Camp Pendleton, California and at the Marine Corps Air Facility (MCAF) in Santa Ana, California. While at Camp Pendleton he served with the Second Battalion, Fifth Marines, First Marine Division (FMF) USMC.

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Jake: What has your association with The American Legion been like over the last three years?

Jonathan: It has changed drastically since meeting you and actually learning more about the Legion overall. We have meetings from time to time at my local post, but it has really opened my eyes to see more of the benefits and services that are offered. Now I'm actually influencing other veterans and letting them know what's available for them because of their service.

Jake: How did you become a USAA member?

Jonathan: I've been a member of USAA since 1999. It was through my dad's membership and before my first deployment. Ever since then, USAA has taken care of me, whether it was helping me financially when I didn't have that much time, or taking care of me when I was transitioning out of the military.

Jake: What made you decide to work for USAA?

Jonathan: If there's one thing that I can say about USAA compared to other jobs I had when I got out of the military, there's not one other company that gives so much recognition and appreciativeness towards veterans.

Jake: Speaking of appreciating veterans, our wars and experiences were very different. Why do you think we and other veterans from different eras are able to bond so easily?

Jonathan: Just being part of the service forms that bond. But also, when you meet someone, you just know off the bat. When I met you, you didn't put any kind of shield around yourself. You brought me right in, and allowed me to bring you in, as well. We were able to share our experiences, and an instant friendship was formed.

Jake: Well, I think that's what's important about USAA, too. It starts with employees like you. I didn't meet the heads of the company right away; I met them later. First I met you, and that goes back to rank not being important. There's no rank among us. We don't care about that now. It's about the service we can present to our members. I certainly hope that more of our members will join both organizations, and that more will understand the cooperation between two outstanding companies for the benefit of our military and our veterans.

Jonathan: Absolutely. It's been said that we serve both sides of the same street, and that's true. USAA has benefits and services available for veterans just as the Legion does, and we also believe that our members are our family. They have unique needs, and we try to meet them with products and services that fit their lifestyle. When other companies wouldn't insure our members during wartime, we did. When other companies were focused on building more branches, we came up with Deposit@Mobile for smartphones so deployed members could still do their banking. When our members' families need us most, we have an outstanding Survivor Relations team to make sure they're taken care of. Those are a few examples, but everything we do at USAA focuses on going above and beyond for our members — just like the Legion.

Jake: It reminds me of the way I end all my speeches — and I've given many. "When we hear, we forget. When we see, we remember. When we do, we understand." As a private organization, you're not military, yet no one else covers the military better than you guys.

Jonathan: That's because every employee at USAA truly believes in and lives our mission to take care of military families and veterans better than any other company, and in helping to ensure their financial security. And it's certainly our pleasure to assist Legionnaires, who have that same devotion to service.

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